

LANDSLIDES & DEBRIS FLOW TIPS

In a landslide, masses of rock, earth, or debris (rubble or trash) move down a slope. Debris and mud flows are rivers of rock, earth, and other debris soaked with water. They develop when water builds up quickly in the ground during heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt and changes the earth into a flowing river of mud or “slurry.” They can occur quickly, striking fast with little or no warning. They also can travel several miles from their source, growing in size as they pick up trees, boulders, cars, and other materials.

Am I at Risk?

Landslides occur in all U.S. states and territories and can be caused by a variety of things, including earthquakes, storms, volcanic eruptions, fire, and even construction. They are more common in mountain, canyon, and coastal regions.

Be Prepared!

Before

- Build an emergency kit.
- Make a family communications plan.

During

- Stay alert and awake. Many people die from landslides when they are sleeping.
- Listen for unusual sounds like trees cracking or boulders knocking together. If you hear something immediately!
Move away from the path of a landslide or debris flow as fast as you can.
- Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas.
- If you can't escape, curl into a tight ball and cover your head with your hands and arms.

After

- Stay away from the slide area. There may be additional slides.
- If you see dangling or loose wires and stay away.
- Listen to safety officials about where it's safe to go.
- Text, don't talk. Unless there's a life-threatening situation, send a text so that you don't tie up phone lines needed by emergency workers. Plus, texting may work even if cell service is down.

For more information, visit:

www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/landslides-debris-flow
www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/landslides.asp

Words to Know

- **Debris:** Rubble, trash, random material-like large pieces of wood, metal, or plastic.
- **Slurry:** River of flowing mud
- **Slope:** Cracks in the rocks below the earth's surface.
- **Low-Lying Area:** Land that is close to a coast or near water or sea levels.

Facts

- Warnings of a landslide include: leaning trees, water coming through the ground in new places, widening cracks in the ground/streets/driveways, tilting utility poles, new cracks in tiles, bricks, or building foundations, etc.
- You cannot outrun a mudslide.
- Other natural disasters that can cause a land or mudslide are earthquakes, volcanic eruption, floods, or hurricanes.

