

Landslides

By Nhu Le

Have you ever wondered what **landslides** are? Landslides occur when a rush of dirt and rocks slide, flow or fall down from a mountain or steep hill. Landslides can move very fast or very slowly. They are caused by natural occurrences or from poorly planned human activities.

One natural event that can cause a landslide is an earthquake.

Earthquakes cause the ground to vibrate and may loosen dirt and rocks, causing them to move. Also, when the vegetation on a hill is lost due to a wildfire, the soil lacks anything to keep it in place and it is more likely to slide down a steep surface. Heavy rains or lots of snow melting may also instigate, or cause, the movement of debris.

Human actions can also impact the likelihood of a landslide. For example, if a road is not properly designed it can overload (or put too much pressure on) a slope. Also, **water run-off** (water that starts as precipitation and then flows across land) from forest clearing can cause a landslide.

Landslides are caused by so many things that they are often not easily controlled or predicted. Although they are a natural disaster that is common throughout the world, they are not always big and do not always take lives.

