

## Earthquake Plan

### General

One of the most frightening and destructive phenomena of nature is a severe earthquake and its terrible aftereffects. An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long time.

While earthquakes are sometimes believed to be a West Coast occurrence, there are actually 45 states and territories throughout the United States that are at moderate to high risk for earthquakes including the New Madrid fault line in Central U.S.

The 2011 East Coast earthquake illustrated the fact that it is impossible to predict when or where an earthquake will occur, so it is important that you are prepared ahead of time.

### Alerting

The shaking of the ground or building will be the only warning you might receive. There will be no formal alerting of an earthquake.

### Procedures

Drop, Cover and Hold On. Minimize your movements to a few steps to a nearby safe place and if you are indoors, stay there until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

#### Indoors

- DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Do not use a doorway except if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway and it is close to you. Many inside doorways are lightly constructed and do not offer protection.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Do not exit a building during the shaking. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.
- DO NOT use the elevators

- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.

### Outdoors

- Stay there
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls. Many of the 120 fatalities from the 1933 Long Beach earthquake occurred when people ran outside of buildings only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls. Ground movement during an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

### Moving Vehicle

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Richard Bland College Emergency Management