



Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Earthquakes

Earthquakes occur most frequently west of the Rocky Mountains, although historically the most violent have occurred in the central United States. Earthquakes occur suddenly and without warning and can seriously damage buildings and their contents; disrupt gas, electric, and telephone services; and trigger landslides, avalanches, flash floods, fires, and huge ocean waves, called tsunamis. Aftershocks can occur for weeks following an earthquake.

Your business should have a written plan for preparing for earthquakes. Consider the following guidelines when preparing your plans:

	Yes	No	N/A
Have you had your facility inspected by a structural engineer to assess its vulnerability to earthquakes?			
Have you asked local government agencies for seismic information for your area?			
Based on the engineering inspection, have you developed and prioritized strengthening measures including:			
Adding steel bracing to frames?			
Adding sheer walls to frames?			
Strengthening columns and building foundations?			
Replacing unreinforced brick filler walls?			
Have you followed codes when constructing a facility or making major renovations?			
Have you inspected non-structural systems, such as air conditioning, communications, and pollution control systems, to assess the potential for damage and prioritize measures to prevent damage?			
Have you inspected your facility for any item that could fall, spill, break, or move during an earthquake including:			
Moving large and heavy objects to lower shelves or the floor, and hanging heavy items away from where people work?			
Securing shelves, filing cabinets, tall furniture, desktop equipment, computers, printers, copiers, and light fixtures?			
Securing fixed equipment and heavy machinery to the floor (larger equipment can be placed on casters and attached to tethers that attach to the wall)?			
Adding bracing to suspended ceilings, if necessary?			
Installing safety glass, where appropriate?			
Securing large utility and process piping?			

Are copies of facility design drawings maintained so that they can be used in assessing the facility's safety after an earthquake?		
Have you reviewed processes for handling and storing hazardous materials?		
Are incompatible chemicals stored separately?		
Have you asked your insurance carrier about earthquake insurance and mitigation techniques?		
Have procedures been established to determine whether an evacuation is necessary after an earthquake?		
Have you designated areas in the facility, away from exterior walls and windows, where personnel should gather after an earthquake if an evacuation is not necessary?		
Are earthquake drills conducted?		
Have personnel been provided with earthquake safety information including:		
If indoors during an earthquake, stay there, take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or counter, or brace yourself against an inside wall, and protect your head and neck.		
If outdoors during an earthquake, move into the open, away from buildings, street lights, and utility wires.		
After an earthquake, stay away from windows, skylights, and items that could fall and do not use the elevators.		
Use stairways to leave the building if it is determined that a building evacuation is necessary.		
If your facility is located near the ocean, have you planned for the possibility of a tsunami in your emergency plans?		
If your facility is located at the base of a mountain or high hill, have you planned for the possibility of landslides, mudslides, or avalanches in your emergency plans?		
If your facility is located in a low plain or valley, have you planned for the possibility of floods in your emergency plans?		

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