

# RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

## Earthquake Awareness: Preparation Matters

According to the US Geological Survey's Earthquake information center, every state in the US has experienced an earthquake. Earthquakes happen without warning and can cause fires, damage to roads, tsunamis, landslides and property damage (to name a few). While not all states experience the same type and amount of earthquakes, being prepared for an earthquake saves lives and property. Areas that will be reviewed in this alert include:

1. Preparation tips before an earthquake
2. Actions to take during an earthquake
3. Keeping safety following an earthquake

### Preparing for the potential Earthquake

If you have ever been in an earthquake, you know how frightening and uncontrolled the experience can be. Since earthquakes come without warning, unlike many other natural disasters, the best way to minimize negative outcomes are to prepare in advance for the possibility. Below are a few tips to prepare for an earthquake:

1. Establish an emergency action plan (or review existing plan for updates)
  - a. Detailed instructions for all employees
  - b. Emergency response responsibilities
  - c. Business continuity and contingency planning
2. Prepare your facilities
  - a. Identify existing building weaknesses, such as structural vulnerabilities
  - b. Secure items that might fall, such as equipment and cabinets
  - c. Secure hazardous material containers (such as propane tanks)
  - d. Ensure emergency supply kits are available
3. Prepare your workers
  - a. Ensure all employees complete emergency action training
  - b. Hold periodic earthquake drills to give employees a chance to practice and to evaluate procedures

### Protecting yourself during an earthquake

When an earthquake starts you have seconds to take action to protect yourself. Below are a few basic steps to take:

If Inside:

1. Drop
  - a. Drop where you are onto your hands and knees to avoid being knocked over by shaking. This will allow you to move as necessary.

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2. Cover
  - a. Cover your head and neck with your arms. If a sturdy table or desk is nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter. If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from windows). Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris. Stay on your knees; bend over to protect vital organs. Do NOT stand in a doorway.
3. Hold-on
  - a. If you are under a table or desk, hold onto with one hand and be ready to move with it if it moves. If you can't find a table or desk: hold on to your head and neck with both arms and hands. If seated and unable to drop to the floor: bend forward, cover your head with your arms, and hold on to your neck with both hands.

If outside:

1. Move away from buildings, utility or gas lines and hazardous material containers
2. Stay low to avoid being knocked down by shaking
3. If you are in a moving automobile, stop as quickly and safely as possible. Move your car to the shoulder or curb, away from utility poles, overhead wires, and under-or overpasses. Stay in the car and set the parking brake.

## What to do after the earthquake

Once the shaking has subsided, serious hazards may be present. Follow these guidelines:

If you are not trapped

- If you are in a damaged building and there is a safe way out through the debris, leave and go to an open space outside, away from damaged buildings.

If you are trapped

- If you are trapped, do not move about or kick up dust.
- If you have a cell phone, attempt to use it to call or text for help
- Tap a pipe or wall or whistle if you can so rescuers can locate you

Be prepared for aftershocks

- Ensure employees do not re-enter a damaged building
- Coordinate with responders for determining rescue plan
- Be ready to Drop, Cover and Hold-on

Execute your company emergency action and contingency plans

- Follow procedures for evacuation
- Authorize responders to assist those injured or trapped

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## Additional Resources:

- [www.ready.gov/earthquakes](http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes)
- [www.fema.gov/earthquake-safety-work](http://www.fema.gov/earthquake-safety-work)

For additional information contact:

Alliant Risk Control Solution Center Toll Free Help Line: 888 737 4752.