



## **EARTHQUAKE SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **Introduction**

It is not possible to prevent earthquakes or change the likelihood of an earthquake occurring. However, we can greatly increase our chances of safety and survival, by being aware and prepared. Since knowledge and preparation are keys to your survival during and after an earthquake, you should take steps to become informed.

### **Dangers Associated with Earthquakes**

- The actual movement of the ground in an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of injury or death. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris or collapsing structures. Injuries are commonly caused by:
- Partial building collapse, such as falling masonry, collapsing walls, falling ceiling plaster, etc.
- Flying glass from broken windows.
- Overturned bookcases, filing cabinets, fixtures, furniture, office machines and appliances.
- Fires, broken gas lines, etc. These dangers may be aggravated by lack of water due to broken mains.
- Fallen power lines.
- Inappropriate actions resulting from panic.

### **Earthquake Safety Guidelines**

- Remain Calm. Sound usually precedes earthquake motion by a split second. If you have developed the correct earthquake responses in your mind before a quake, this split second is enough time to activate your automatic reactions. If you stay calm, you will be better able to assess your situation. The rolling and roaring may terrify you, but unless something falls on you, the sensations probably won't hurt you. Try talking yourself through the violent motion phase. This will release stress and others may take courage and follow your reasoned restraint. Think through the consequences of any action you plan to take.
- If you are indoors, stay there. If you are in danger:
  - Get under a sturdy table, desk or bed.
  - Brace yourself in an inside corner away from windows.
  - Move to an inner wall or corridor. (A door frame or the structural frame or inner core of the building are its strongest points and least likely to collapse. They will also break the impact of any falling objects).
  - In an apartment building the safest place is by the central reinforced core of the building, which is usually located by the elevator well.
  - Choose shelter which will provide an airspace if it collapses. If your furniture shelter moves, stay under it and follow it around the apartment.
  - Watch for falling objects - plaster, bricks, light fixtures, pots and pans, etc.
  - Stay away from tall shelves, china cabinets and other furniture, which might slide or topple over.
  - Stay away from windows, sliding glass doors, mirrors.
  - Grab anything handy (blanket, pillow, tablecloth, newspapers, box, etc.) to shield your head and face from failing debris and splinting glass.
  - Don't be alarmed if the fire alarm or sprinklers go off.