

PREPARING FOR EARTHQUAKES



This talk discusses the steps that employees should take in the event of an earthquake in their workplace.

Materials to have on hand:

- A floor plan indicating the location of emergency exits
- An example of a disaster kit

Items for attendees to consider during the talk:

- Do you know if objects in your work area have been secured to resist falling?
- Are you aware of the actions you should take if an earthquake occurs?
- Do you know the locations of the exit routes at our facility?

TALK

There are very few places in the United States that are immune from earthquakes. Because of the possibility of an earthquake in your area at any time, it's important that we review the steps that all of us can take to ensure our safety should the "big one," or, more likely, a smaller earthquake, occur.

Securing moveable objects in your space

Earthquakes can easily move heavy objects, so be sure to identify those in your space that could be tossed around and/or fall upon you during an earthquake. These could include:

- Bookcases,
- Filing cabinets,
- Computers,
- Shelving units,
- HVAC units,
- Emergency batteries,
- Lockers and storage cabinets,
- Chemicals, and
- Gas cylinders.

Many of these objects can be secured to the wall with bolts, flexible fasteners, and the like. Items on open shelving units, such as chemicals, can be restrained by wood or plexiglass strips, and gas cylinders and large fire extinguishers can be secured with rope and eyebolts. Management will take the steps to secure these objects, but you can help by pointing out ones that are not already secure. You can also move heavy or large items in your work area to the floor or low shelves. Also be on the lookout for any heavy or unstable items that are near doors and escape routes.

[Continued on page 2](#)

Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/

Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

PREPARING FOR EARTHQUAKES



Drop, Cover, and Hold On

Most emergency preparedness experts recommend the “Drop, Cover, and Hold On” actions as the best way to protect yourself during earthquake shaking. This is how it works:

- Drop where you are onto your hands and knees. This position protects you from being knocked down and allows you to stay low and to crawl to nearby shelter.
- Cover your head and neck with one arm and hand. If there’s a sturdy table or desk nearby, crawl underneath it for shelter, or crawl next to an interior wall that’s away from windows. Stay bent over on your knees to protect vital organs.
- Hold on until the shaking stops. If you’re under shelter, hold on to it with one hand, and be ready to move with your shelter if it shifts. If you’re not sheltered, hold on to your head and neck with both arms and hands.

If you’re seated and unable to drop to the floor, you should bend forward and hold on to your head and neck with both arms and hands.

Prepare a kit of disaster supplies

Keep a kit of disaster supplies at the location in the facility where you spend most of your time so you can reach it even if the building is badly damaged. Keeping a second kit in your vehicle is also a good idea. Here are items you should include:

- Medications, prescription list, copies of medical cards, doctor’s name, and contact information;

- First-aid kit and handbook;
- Dust mask;
- Spare eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution;
- Bottled water and snack foods that are high in water content and calories;
- Whistle for alerting rescuers to your location;
- Sturdy shoes;
- Emergency cash;
- Personal hygiene items;
- Working flashlight with extra batteries and lightbulbs or light sticks; and
- Copies of personal identification, such as your driver’s license and work identification card.

Keep the disaster supplies, preferably in a backpack, so that you can take them with you if you evacuate.

Leaving the building

If you are inside, don’t go outdoors until you’ve been advised that it’s safe to do so by the emergency coordinator. It will not be safe to exit the building until the ground has stopped shaking and the surrounding area is deemed safe. At that point, our facility’s emergency action plan will kick into place, and you will exit in accordance with the exit drills that we’ve previously practiced.

If you follow these steps, you will be confident that you know what to do in the event of an earthquake, and you will increase your chances of remaining safe throughout the event.