



AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

- Evacuate the building in an orderly manner as soon as the shaking stops
- Do a head count by department to ascertain if anyone from the organization is missing. Report missing persons to a safety warden
- Never re-enter a building after an earthquake until you are informed that it is safe to do so by the authorities
- Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury
- Check for fires or fire hazards
- Report damage to the appropriate utility companies. Never turn on electrical switches until you are informed that it is safe to do so
- Never use matches, lighters, or open flame until you are certain that no gas leak exists
- Ensure that sewage lines are intact before flushing toilets
- Do not use your telephone except for genuine emergency calls
- Listen to the radio for damage reports and other information
- Do not go sight seeing, especially if you work along the coastline where the threat of tsunamis exists. A tsunami is a series of ocean waves often produced by an earthquake. Businesses along the shoreline are at greatest risk

- Be prepared for additional earthquakes called 'aftershocks'. Although most of these are smaller than the main shock, some may be large enough to cause additional damage, and damaged buildings may collapse
- Keep the street clear for the passage of emergency vehicles

NOTE:

All workers should be adequately instructed in fire prevention and emergency instructions applicable to their place of employment.

EMERGENCY PLANS

An emergency plan outlines the roles and procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency. All businesses should develop an emergency plan. All employees should be familiar with the plan and know their role under the plan. Each employee must be concerned about

personal safety in the event of a disaster and make personal and family preparations should such an eventuality occur.

Your organization's emergency plan should include actions for all potential situations.

For Further Information contact:

**Office of Disaster Preparedness
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EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

for Businesses





JAMAICA'S VULNERABILITY

Jamaica's location along the northern margin of the Caribbean Plate and the presence of very active faults on the island, makes it vulnerable to earthquakes. An earthquake is a sudden shaking or trembling of the earth caused by the shifting of the rocks beneath the earth's surface.

It is important for Jamaicans to understand that earthquakes can occur anywhere on the island. Building codes that require earthquake-resistant construction should be followed, as well as mitigation measures which can reduce injury and damage.

WHAT TO EXPECT In An EARTHQUAKE

During an earthquake, the earth moves like the deck of a ship. The actual movement of the ground, however is seldom the cause of injury or death. Most deaths are caused by the collapse of structures. Injuries are commonly caused by:

- ♦ Building collapse or damage, falling blocks, roofs, ceiling plaster, light fixtures and pictures
- ♦ Flying glass from broken windows. This danger may be even greater for those businesses located in high rise structures
- ♦ Overturned bookcases, wall units, filing

- ♦ Fires from ruptured gas and electrical lines. This danger may also be aggravated by a lack of water due to broken water mains
- ♦ Fallen power lines
- ♦ Train and vehicular accidents

EARTHQUAKE PRECAUTIONS

Although earthquakes strike without warning, there are many actions that can be taken to reduce their impact. It is important that precautions be taken before an earthquake occurs.

1. BEFORE An EARTHQUAKE

Buildings should be inspected for:

1. cracks and weaknesses
 2. defective electrical wiring
 3. inflexible gas connections and leaking gas
 4. objects that could topple, causing injury
- ♦ Bolt down water heaters and gas appliances
 - ♦ Know where and how to shut off electricity, gas and water at main switches and valves
 - ♦ Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves
 - ♦ Securely fasten shelves and filing cabinets to walls. Computers should be attached to desks
 - ♦ Strap down high or top heavy objects
 - ♦ Bottles, glass, china, and other breakables should be stored in low cabinets. All cabinets

- ♦ Overhead lighting fixtures, such as chandeliers, and fluorescent bulbs should be securely anchored and covered
- ♦ Practise earthquake drills regularly so employees know what to do in an earthquake. This would include:
 - the evacuation of the building
 - the identification of an open space as an assembly point after the earthquake
 - the formation and training of a safety committee
 - developing a disaster plan

HAVE ON HAND

- ♦ Flashlights and battery operated radios in case power is cut off
- ♦ Fire extinguishers
- ♦ First Aid kits

2. DURING An EARTHQUAKE

- ♦ Stay calm—think through the consequences of any action you take
- ♦ If you are inside, stay inside. Take cover under a heavy desk, table, bench, in a supported doorway or a corner
- ♦ If you are in a high rise building, get under a desk or similar heavy furniture. When the shaking stops, evacuate by stairway. Never use elevators during an earthquake
- ♦ If you are outdoors, stay outdoors. During earthquakes, most injuries occur as people are entering or leaving buildings. Move away from buildings and utility wires. Do not run through streets. If you are in an