

Earthquake Preparation For Office Safety



Earthquake Safety at Work

Unlike hurricanes and some other natural hazards, earthquakes strike suddenly and without warning. Nevertheless, if the business that you work at is located in a region at risk for earthquakes, there are many things that can be done to reduce the chances that those who work in or visit the premises will be injured, that property there will be damaged, or that your day-to-day operations will be unduly disrupted by an earthquake. These activities all fall under the concept of *preparedness*, because to be effective, they must be done *before* earthquakes occur.

Prepare Your Facilities - - Keep Our Employees Safe

Make your buildings safer to be in during earthquakes and more resistant to earthquake damage and disruption. Depending on when and how they were designed, built, and furnished, existing buildings may have weaknesses that make them more vulnerable to earthquakes.

Many injuries that occur during an earthquake come from falling objects. To help eliminate some of these injuries, below are some steps that can be taken *before* the earthquakes occur.

- ▶ **Position furniture** in the room to minimize or eliminate injury or damage. Are there items stored above you or are you located near a large window?
- ▶ **Move any large items that can fall and block the exits** such as a book case or filing cabinet.
- ▶ **Heavy objects that hang on walls such as paintings and fire extinguishers** – these objects can be secured to their structural framing or use of picture snaps with Velcro corners can prevent falling.
- ▶ **Potted plants hanging from the ceiling** – These can be secured with wire loops or closed eye hooks.
- ▶ **Potted plants on shelves** - can be stabilized by Velcro on the bottom of the containers, install a guardrail or place them on an earthquake mat.
- ▶ **Filing cabinets** – can be secured to the wall and the drawers not in use can be locked to prevent opening during movement of the quake.
- ▶ **Water coolers** – can be secured to the wall with fasteners.
- ▶ **Computers, printers, faxes and all other office equipment** – can be secured using seismic buckles, Velcro or earthquake matting.
- ▶ **Bookshelves** – can be secured to the wall by approved fastening techniques to prevent them from falling over.
- ▶ **Wall Mounted Shelves** – Be mindful of the type of items that are stored on these shelves and where the shelves are located. During an earthquake, one of these items could fall off the shelf and cause an injury.
- ▶ **Miscellaneous fragile items** - can be stabilized by using earthquake putty or placed on earthquake mats to reduce damage or injury.
- ▶ **Rolling carts** – locking the wheels can prevent them from movement during the earthquake.

