

# Pre-Earthquake Planning

## AT HOME:

*A one-story, wood frame house is one of the safest places to be in an earthquake.*

Think about how you can protect yourself and make your home safer. Discuss it with your family. Be aware of special hazards in your home and secondary hazards, which may follow an earthquake, such as fire, flood, or landslide. After an earthquake, you may be isolated for a short time, and will have to act on your own so make sure to:

**Learn** First Aid. Training is available through the Caltech EH&S Office. Contact them at [safety.training@caltech.edu](mailto:safety.training@caltech.edu) or ext. 6727 to enroll.

**Have** a battery-powered radio, flashlight and first aid kit in your home. Make sure everyone in the family knows where they are stored. Keep extra batteries on hand.

**Know** the location of your gas and water shut-off valves, and your electric fuse or circuit box. Have a wrench handy, and make sure all responsible members of your family learn how to turn them on and off.

**Store** a few days supply of food (canned or sealed package food that doesn't need heating or refrigeration), can opener, and plastic jugs of water. Learn how to drain water from your hot water heater for drinking.

**Securely** fasten heavy appliances to the floor, anchor furniture like bookcases to the wall and remove heavy objects from high shelving.

**Discuss** a plan for reuniting your family if you are separated.

**Keep** food, water and clothing in your car.

## AT CALTECH:

Think about how you can make your work area safe. Caltech's buildings are designed to remain structurally sound during an earthquake. More likely, hazardous conditions will result from problems within the buildings such as falling objects, spilled chemical, broken gas and water lines and fires. It is also likely that initially, we will be unable to rely on public services for help. Even though there will be an organized recovery response coordinated by Physical Plant, there are a few things that can be done to prepare yourself and your work area:

**Learn** the location of Exits, Fire Extinguishers and First Aid Kits. If your work area has a first aid kit, make sure it is adequately supplied (call the EH&S Office for supplies at ext. 6727).

**Have** a battery-powered flashlight with extra batteries.

**Know** how to summon emergency help, ext. 5000.

**All** chemical storage shelves should have earthquake restraints and chemicals should be stored on these shelves when not in actual use. Gas cylinders should be stored in properly designed racks.

**Secure** all tall bookcases, cabinets and equipment. Anchor desktop equipment.

**Remove** items above desks that could fall on you.

**Position** desks so that chairs are not directly under ceiling light fixtures.

# EARTHQUAKE

## *PROTECTING LIFE TAKES PRIORITY OVER ANY OTHER ACTIVITY*

### Wherever you are:

*Do* remain there and take cover under a desk, table, bench or bed, if possible. If none is available, sit or stand against an INTERIOR wall, or stand in an inside doorway.

*Do* stay away from all glass surfaces (windows, doors, mirrors, china, cupboards, etc.) and outside doors.

*Do* remain outdoors if you are there. Many injuries occur while entering or leaving buildings.

*Do* wait for and follow instructions of those authorized to direct emergency and disaster operations.

*Do Not* run outside of your building or home during an earthquake. Falling debris and high-voltage electric wires present real dangers.

*Do Not* drink water or use gas or electric appliances before determining if it is safe to do so.

*Do Not* endanger life or risk accident by attempting to fight fire. Call the Fire Department (if fire is small and an extinguisher is available an attempt may be made to extinguish it).

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### IF you are at Caltech:

*Do* secure all operations, as time permits, and move to a non-hazardous area, such as a hallway if your workstation is in a laboratory or other hazardous area. If you must evacuate your building, move to an open area such as a parking lot or athletic field.

*Do* call Security at ext. 5000, before attempting to put out an incipient fire.

*Do* assist the injured. Administer First Aid if necessary. Do not move seriously injured individuals unless absolutely necessary. Report all injuries to security and emergency response personnel.

*Do Not* use elevators. If you are trapped in an elevator, remain calm. Obtain assistance by following the instructions on the emergency phone inside the passenger compartment.

*Do Not* try to check or detect the source of any gaseous or foreign odor. Do not use matches or lighters. Call the EH&S Office at ext. 6727 or Security at ext. 5000, and leave the area immediately.

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### If you are at HOME:

*Do* Know the location and operation of shut-off valves for gas, water and electric power. If you detect a gaseous or foreign odor, do not try to check the source with matches or candles. Leave your house or apartment immediately.

*Do* know the location of and how to turn off the main power switch in your house if structural damage has occurred or BEFORE unplugging any wet appliances.

### If you are DRIVING:

*Do* pull off the roadway and stop clear of pole lines or other elevated structures. If on the freeway, slow your speed. Stay clear of underpasses and bridges.

*Do* remain in your car until the disturbance subsides.

*Do* turn on your car radio and try to get emergency broadcast, which will inform you of safety procedures and traffic or road hazards.

*Do* proceed with caution. Watch for the aftermath of earthquakes, such as fallen or falling objects, downed electric wires, and broken or undermined roadway.

***PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE FOR PRE-EARTHQUAKE PLANNING***