

There is a high chance that a high magnitude earthquake will occur in Washington in the near future. An earthquake of high magnitude can pose an immediate hazard to worker safety, strain public services, and disrupt business.

The best way to survive an earthquake safely is to **prepare, plan, and practice.**

Prepare your workplace for an earthquake.

Large equipment such as boilers, tanks, and machines need to be secured properly so they will not fall over in an earthquake. Furniture, such as bookshelves and file cabinets, along with storage racks and shelving, should be strapped or attached to the wall to keep it stable and upright.

Survey your workspace to make sure that heavy items are stored at lower heights or secured so they won't fall. Photos and pictures should be hung onto the wall with screws or earthquake "j" clips. Keep doors, exits, and aisle-ways clear at all times for quick access evacuations. Keep areas under desks and tables uncluttered to make room to take cover in an earthquake. Store chemicals properly and in compatible groups.

Gather emergency supplies for the workplace.

Fire extinguishers should be charged and inspected monthly, so they are always ready to use. Periodically test fire alarms, sprinklers, and emergency lighting. Keep flashlights, a radio, extra batteries, and a first aid kit on hand at all times. Consider stockpiling food, water, blankets, and sanitary supplies such as toilet paper and portable toilets. Keep enough supplies for the number of workers that may need to shelter or work at your facility after an earthquake. Prepare personal emergency supplies for your desk and your car, including comfortable clothes and shoes, a flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, food, water, and necessary medications.

Make an emergency plan for work and home.

Businesses must have an emergency evacuation plan that details how employees will evacuate from the building, where they will meet, how to account for everyone, and how to get further instructions to act. Current emergency contact phone numbers for all employees and management are critical in an emergency. Businesses should also list and prioritize their functions in a [Business Continuity Plan](#) (BCP) that ensures access to the people, materials, and other supplies needed to continue work after an earthquake.

Workers should have family emergency plans in place at home in case they are stranded at work or required to work after an earthquake. Keep enough emergency supplies on hand to maintain your family for at least 3 days. Make lists of emergency contact phone numbers and determine a meeting place for the family after an emergency.

Practice and train on your emergency procedures.

Practice emergency evacuations. Get training on first aid and CPR techniques. Train and remember to Drop, Cover, and Hold On in an earthquake. During an earthquake, duck or drop down on the floor. Take cover under a sturdy desk or table and hold on to it so that you can move with it during the shaking. If you cannot take cover, stand against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Practice your business recovery procedures by inspecting and restarting equipment and computers in the proper and prioritized order.

Earthquakes aren't planned, but YOU can plan and practice to survive.