

# Doing Business in Earthquake Country

## Employee Preparedness



Photo by FEMA/Brittany Trotter

Above: A Great ShakeOut earthquake drill during America's PrepareAthon in 2013 taught participants how to drop, cover, and hold on. (Learn how at [www.dropcoverholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverholdon.org))

### In this fact sheet:

- Why businesses should cultivate a culture of preparedness
- What administrators can do to ensure that their employees are ready for the next quake
- Tips and resources to help employers and employees prepare for earthquakes both at home and at work

### Why Planning Matters

- Businesses that plan and prepare for earthquakes are more likely to remain in business after a damaging quake or other disaster occurs.
- Participants at CREW's business roundtables in 2012 agreed: The level of personal preparation among employees directly affects a business's ability to resume operations after an earthquake.

## Are Your Employees Ready?

Getting back to business after a damaging earthquake may require more than just physical repairs. A swift and successful recovery depends greatly on a business's employees:

- Are they prepared for an emergency, both at home and at work?
- Will they be ready to report to work when they're needed—and be able to focus on their jobs when they get there?
- Does the business's continuity plan consider potential post-earthquake problems that could prevent employees from resuming work, such as blocked transportation routes or lack of childcare due to school closures?

## Leading by Example

Business owners and administrators can help improve the readiness of employees in many ways, but creating a culture of preparedness at the work place is critical to success. Employees are more likely to put time and effort into preparing themselves and their families for earthquakes and other emergencies if they see that the business's leadership team actively plans and trains for such an event. Thoughtful emergency and continuity planning can also identify which employees will be needed at each stage of the recovery and define what their roles will be.

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Temporary transportation solutions were needed after a damaging M6.1 earthquake struck Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2011.

Photo by Ross Becker, CERPA photo gallery

### Did You Know?

- Preparing for an earthquake helps ensure that you're ready for other hazards, too.
- Business leaders who have experienced disasters affirm that recovery depends on pre-disaster planning and the ability to muster employees:

[www.ready.gov/business/business-testimonials](http://www.ready.gov/business/business-testimonials)

## What Employers Can Do

Inform employees about earthquakes and other hazards, provide emergency response training, and participate in regular drills, such as ShakeOut and fire drills. Other effective steps include posting earthquake information and resources on the company's internal website and supplying employees with on-site disaster kits.

A business's most important tools are its disaster response and business continuity plans. These should include a method for communicating with employees and should clearly identify critical business functions along with the employees who will be needed to perform them. Consider also how employees will get to work and whether some can work remotely. (See *Featured Links to learn more.*)

## Reduce Earthquake Risk at Home

Employees should be prepared for earthquakes at home as well as at work.

Encourage them to:

- Make a personal/family emergency plan and identify an out-of-area contact.
- Prepare and maintain emergency supply kits for everyone in the family, including pets. Have enough food, water, and other necessities to last at least 3–7 days.
- Assess and address potential hazards around the home: For example, strap the water heater to the wall, secure tall furniture and heavy objects that could cause injuries, and make sure the house is fastened to its foundation.

For more information—including checklists and templates for plans—see *Featured Links* below.



The damage to these buildings in Seattle was caused by the Nisqually earthquake in 2001—a vivid reminder that the Northwest is earthquake country. Before the next quake hits, take steps to prepare at work and at home. Your efforts will make you safer, more resilient, and better able to get back to business.

## Featured Links

FEMA: [www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business)

ShakeOut: [www.shakeout.org](http://www.shakeout.org)

Washington EMD (Business Portal):  
[www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep\\_business.shtml](http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_business.shtml)

Earthquake Country Alliance (Business):  
[www.earthquakecountry.org/roots/7StepsBusiness2008.pdf](http://www.earthquakecountry.org/roots/7StepsBusiness2008.pdf)

EPICC Earthquake Planning for Business:  
[www.iclr.org/images/Earthquake\\_planning\\_for\\_business.pdf](http://www.iclr.org/images/Earthquake_planning_for_business.pdf)

All-hazards planning: [takewinterbystorm.org](http://takewinterbystorm.org)

Reduce earthquake risk at home:  
[www.ready.gov/emergency-planning-checklists](http://www.ready.gov/emergency-planning-checklists)  
[www.makeitthrough.org/](http://www.makeitthrough.org/)

**Learn More at CREW.ORG**