Earthquake Emergency Actions

No matter where you are, know how to protect yourself during an earthquake.

Take COVER under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture. If that is not possible, seek cover against an interior wall and protect your head and neck with your arms. Avoid danger spots near windows, hanging objects, mirrors or tall furniture. In laboratories get away from area with chemical, radioactive or biological materials.

In a HIGH-RISE BUILDING, move against an interior wall if you are not near a desk or table. Protect your head and neck with your arms. Do not use the elevators.

If OUTDOORS, move to a clear area away from trees, signs, buildings, or downed electrical wires and poles.

If you are NEAR BUILDINGS, either duck into a doorway to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass, plaster and other debris or get away far enough that debris won’t hit you.

If you are DRIVING, pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses and power lines. Stay inside your vehicle until the shaking stops.

If you are in a CROWDED STORE OR OTHER PUBLIC PLACE, move away from display shelves containing objects that could fall. Do not rush for the exit. Protect your head and neck.

If you are in a STADIUM OR THEATER, stay at your seat, get below the level of the back of the seat and cover your head and neck with your arms.

If you take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture, HOLD on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold the position until the ground stops shaking and it is safe to move.

If you are in a WHEELCHAIR, stay in the chair and move into a doorway that is open or a hallway. Cover your neck and head with your hands.

If you are in BED, stay put and cover your head and neck with pillows or your hands.

When the shaking stops exit the building and make sure it is save before you reenter it.

When preparing for an earthquake, plan on having enough supplies to get you and your family through at least five days. After a major earthquake, there’s a good chance that traditional emergency response teams will be too busy to take care of you and your family. You need to prepare your home and neighborhood.
Earthquake Information

Unlike Tornados and some other natural hazards, earthquakes strike suddenly and without warning. Nevertheless, there are things that you can do to reduce the chances that you, other university community members or members of your household will be injured, or that your life will be unduly disrupted by an earthquake. These things all fit under the term *preparedness*, because to be effective, they must be done before an earthquake occur.

**Be Aware**

When an earthquake occurs the ground and any building, utility pole, bridge or other object will shake. When this shaking begins, it is time to **Drop, Cover and Hold**. Failure to act immediately puts you at greater risks from things falling on your head or neck. Earthquakes don’t kill people, falling objects caused by the earthquake do.

**React Safely**

Take immediate actions to protect yourself! Tell other people around you, in your office, classroom or laboratory to **Drop, Cover and Hold**. Don’t delay protecting yourself. Once the shaking stops, immediately gather your belongings and exit the building. Aftershocks may cause debris loosened by the quake to fall later and you need to be out of buildings and away from structures if they occur. If on campus, do not reenter buildings until told to do so. If at home determine if your home is safe to reenter it. You may need to wait for the fire department to inspect it before it is safe to reenter.

**Survive**

A major earthquake in Louisville may tie up emergency resources for a considerable period of time. You might have to survive for 4-5 days without assistance. Plan what you would do if you couldn’t get food, water, medicine, gasoline or have electricity for 4-5 days. **Prepare emergency supplies now** that you can get to quickly if an earthquake or other catastrophic emergency occurs.

**Contact**

Phone line and cellular towers are affected just like other structures and phone service might not be available or it may be drastically reduced. The university will use UofL Alerts and the media to provide university specific information. You should keep contact numbers for other university employees you work with in order to remain in contact. At home you should decide on a out of state contact person that every family member can reach. This provides a “message center” in the event you can’t reach other family members.

**Prepare**

Maintain a list of your medications, allergies and any other pertinent medical information. Take photos or make videos of your belongings and put them into safe storage. Keep an extra pair of glasses and extra keys handy in the event yours are lost. Consider keeping some cash on hand since an earthquake may impact ATM machines and banks. Locate the shut off valves and switches for water, gas and electricity. Shut these valves off if your house sustains significant damage.

**Community**

Check on fellow university community members to see if they need assistance, especially those that have physical challenges or are older. If you are at home, check on neighbors and provide them assistance if you can. Employees designated as essential may be asked to return to campus, other should not return to campus until told to do so. Once the emergency phase ends, UofL Alerts and the media will provide information where assistance can be obtained and where volunteers are needed. If you and your home are okay, consider helping your fellow employees or community members.