

# Emergency Preparedness - Earthquake Response

## 4110-20 | Emergency Preparedness - Earthquake Response

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### 1. Take Cover

- **If Indoors:**
  - Issue the ‘Duck, Cover and Hold’ command to students and visitors.
  - Protect yourself (‘Duck, Cover and Hold’).
  - Immediately face away from windows and take cover under or beside a desk, counter or table, or next to an interior wall
  - Assume ‘Crash Position’ on knees, head down, one hand clasped over neck (or neck/head covered with book or jacket) and one hand holding on to the furniture.
  - Posture must be such that the most vulnerable areas (neck and chest) are protected.
  
- Count aloud and in unison with the students for the duration of the earthquake.
- After the shaking stops stay where you are until you have counted again to 60.
  
- **If Outdoors:**
  - If possible, move away from embankments, trees, power lines and poles, and any other tall structure.
  - Issue the ‘Duck and Cover’ command to students and visitors.
  - Protect yourself (‘Duck and Cover’).
    - Immediately face away from windows (if near a building).
    - Assume ‘Crash Position’ on knees, head down, both hands clasped over neck (or neck/head covered with book or jacket).
    - Posture must be such that the most vulnerable areas (neck and chest) are protected.
  - Count aloud and in unison with the students for the duration of the earthquake.
  - After the shaking stops stay where you are until you have counted again to 60.

### 2. Evacuate the Building

- Teachers will:
  - ensure gas and equipment, if applicable, are shut off unless doing so jeopardizes the employee’s safety;
  - ascertain if it is safe to exit the classroom via the designated evacuation route;
  - if able to exit classroom, direct students to walk, **with jackets and shoes on**, in a quiet and orderly manner along the evacuation route to the designated assembly area;
  - if an exit route is blocked calmly and firmly lead students to an alternate exit;
  - avoid overhead wires and pipes which may have fallen during the earthquake;
  - activate evacuation plans for any students with special needs;
  - do not delay the evacuation except to reassure the injured or provide life-saving first aid interventions;

- bring a class list, which includes that day's attendance;
- if unable to exit the classroom, have students sit on the floor against an inside wall;
- if unable to exit the classroom, open exterior window and evacuate if on the ground floor, or call for help through the open window if unable to evacuate.
- If a secondary earthquake or 'aftershock' occurs while leaving the building:
  - students/staff should 'Squat and Cover' (place head close to knees, clasp hands behind neck, cover side of head with arms; if cover is available use it or place back against an interior wall).
  - The 'Duck, Cover and Hold' procedure is not advised as the ground may be littered with debris (e.g. broken glass) from the initial shock.
  - Count for the duration of the aftershock, then immediately continue evacuation procedures.
- All employees will ensure that all occupants are able to immediately evacuate the building using the designated evacuation routes to a safe assembly area.
- Stay away from any fallen power lines.
- The earthquake kit must be taken to the command post. Emergency medical forms and supplies will be kept close to or within the earthquake kit.

### **3. Account for all Occupants**

- Teachers will:
  - immediately take attendance at the assembly area;
  - immediately report any missing students, staff and/or visitors to the command post;
  - apply I.D. information to all primary and injured students; if I.D. tags are missing, write I.D. information on children's foreheads; and
  - if the teacher was outside the building at the time of the earthquake, contact the Principal and advise the Principal of the number and location of students with the teacher and the last known location of any missing students, staff and/or visitors.
- The Principal will:
  - set up a command post;
  - determine if all students, staff, and visitors have safely exited the school building(s); and
  - inform fire department officials immediately upon their attendance of names and ages of unaccounted for students, staff, visitors and their possible location in the building, including any injured or trapped persons, or students with special needs, waiting for assistance to be removed from the building.
- All building occupants will remain outside the building until the Principal or designate announces that it is safe to reenter.
- If it is impossible or unsafe to return to the school building, follow emergency student release procedures.
- Students must wait to be reunited with parents or guardians through the Student Release Station; keep accurate records of students released. If there are any students remaining after school hours, they must be accommodated at the school or at an identified Evacuation Reception Centre.

### **4. Situation Management**

- The Principal will attempt to confirm the location(s) of damage in the facility, to advise the responding fire department.
- In a major quake await instructions from emergency officials over a battery-operated or car radio.
- Teachers will:

- remind students that parents may be delayed in calling for them; and
  - encourage students to talk about their anxieties and fears.
- The Principal will:
  - oversee first aid, if necessary;
  - ensure all entrances to school property are open and not blocked;
  - disconnect utilities and equipment unless doing so jeopardizes employee safety; and
  - stand by and be of assistance to fire department officials, as needed.
- Oversee conservation and distribution of uncontaminated water, as well as preparation of emergency facilities.
  - Discard any food items that may have been contaminated, when in doubt throw it out!
  - Do not use water that may be contaminated for washing, cleaning, drinking, or food preparation.
- All media queries regarding an earthquake will be handled through the office of the Superintendent, in consultation with the local fire department.