

Annex A: Earthquake Preparation and Response Guide

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Earthquake Preparation and Response Guide are designed to familiarize college employees and students with procedures before, during, and after an earthquake.

B. SCOPE

This guide is design to help college departments, employees, and students respond to, prepare for earthquakes, and used in conjunction with the Emergency Evacuation Response Guide (Annex D).

C. RESPONSE

During the Earthquake:

If You Are Indoors:

Remain indoors and seek protection until the earthquake subsides. The most dangerous place to be during an earthquake is the area immediately outside of a building. Do not leave a building and enter this dangerous area during the earthquake. Stay calm and take precautions to protect yourself from potential debris:

- Drop to the floor and get under or adjacent to a sturdy table, desk, or permanent fixtures.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.
- Hold onto the table or desk you are under as objects may shift during the earthquake.
- If you are not near a sturdy table or desk, drop to the floor against an interior wall and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.
- Stay away from windows, overhead fixtures, objects on walls, tall furniture, large appliances and cabinets filled with objects that may be displaced and fall during an earthquake.
- If you are in an elevator, remain in place. Elevators provide a reasonable amount of protection. If you become trapped, notify emergency response personnel by using the elevator phone, help button, or cellphone.

If You Are Outdoors:

Move away from buildings, overhangs, trees, and power lines to a clear area such as a large open public area or field. If you are driving, pull over and stop in an area with no overhead hazards such as the following: tall trees, light posts, traffic signs, electrical poles, electrical light poles and traffic lights.

After the Earthquake:

Once the earthquake has stopped, do the following:

- Exit the building when safety permits and move to the designated assembly area.
- Use emergency exit route information posted throughout college buildings to determine the quickest route out of the building.
- Move to the Designated Assembly Area and take account of your co-workers, students, or peers; report-missing persons to emergency response personnel and the Department of Police.
- Do not re-enter any building until it is cleared by the Department of Police, Facilities Management, emergency response personnel, an environmental or college official.

IMPORTANT: If the building loses power during the earthquake and you are unable to safely navigate your way out of the building due to low visibility, remain in place and notify the Department of Police of your location.

The college will assess buildings for damages, chemical and physical hazards, and utility failures prior to authorizing re-occupancy of buildings. If you witness trapped or injured people, contact the Department of Police by dialing 5911 from a college phone or (804) 523-5911 from a cell phone. ***Never re-enter a building that appears to have structural damage.***

Consider the following after an earthquake:

- Limit cell phone usage to text messaging only to allow emergency response communications to function properly.
- If you are unable to re-enter your work area or classroom for an extended period, consider alternate work arrangements and discuss them with your supervisor or instructor.
- Limit travel as major roadways may be congested due to regional evacuations.
- Monitor Reynolds Alert and the college webpage for information updates.
- Remain aware of the potential for aftershocks to occur in the days or weeks following the initial earthquake. Aftershocks are typically less severe than the initial earthquake but can still result in significant damage.
- Buildings, parking structures, and roadways may remain closed for a period following an earthquake while damage assessments and repairs are conducted.
- Be aware that utilities such as gas, power, and water lines may be damaged; if you are aware of a gas leak, power outage, utility failure, or other building damages, report the issue to the Department of Police (804) 523-5911.

D. PREPARATION

Earthquakes cannot be forecasted; therefore, it is best to be prepared at all times. The following are best practices recommended by the Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines to prepare for earthquakes.

- Create a family plan that identifies alternate meeting locations in the event that you or your family are unable to return home, emergency contact numbers, and supplies that may be needed during an emergency, such as bottled water, non-perishable food, and reserve medications. For additional information and a family plan template, please visit www.ReadyVirginia.gov.

- Identify your Primary and Alternate Assembly Areas.
- Store heavy or breakable objects in closed cabinets, as low as possible.
- Secure refrigerators, bookshelves, appliances, bookcases and other heavy items to prevent falling during an earthquake.
- Evaluate where hanging objects are placed. Mirrors, pictures, or other hangings near seating or sleeping areas could fall and cause injury. Arrange these items so they do not pose a fall hazard to those below.