EARTHQUAKES

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long time. These shifts can occur anytime, anywhere. Initial mild shaking may strengthen and become extremely violent within seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may occur for hours, days, or even months. Most are smaller than the initial earthquake, but larger magnitude aftershocks also occur.

RESPOND DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

You may experience a shaking or a rolling motion in the walls, floor, or ground. This movement may grow more extreme within seconds.

- If you do not DROP down immediately, you may be knocked off your feet.
- You may not be able to walk or run.
- Objects may fall off shelves, light fixtures may swing or fall from ceilings, or tall furniture may fall over.
- There may be dust or glass particles in the air or on the ground. You may hear noises like a heavy truck or train passing nearby.
- Avoid telephone gridlock and keep lines open for emergency calls by limiting phone calls to less than a minute.
    - Use text messaging instead as it uses less bandwidth to communicate.
- When the outdoor warning sirens sound, listen to your radio, TV, or mobile device for instructions.
    - When advised, or if threatened by the conditions in your area, evacuate to sturdy buildings or public shelters.
    - Listen for emergency information and alerts.

If an earthquake happens, protect yourself right away:

- If indoors, stay indoors:
    - Avoid windows, glass and tall, heavy furniture, etc.
- If outdoors, stay in an open area.
    - Avoid falling objects or fallen electrical lines.
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over and stop.
    - Set your parking brake.
- Do not get in a doorway.
- Do not run outside.

CAUTION: *Larger earthquakes may cause deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage. Most casualties and injuries during an earthquake occur when people fall while trying to walk or run during the shaking; when they are hit by falling, flying, or sliding items or non-structural debris; and/or when they are struck or trapped by collapsing walls or other parts of the building. Transportation, power, water, gas, and other services may be disrupted. In some areas, shaking can cause liquefaction— when the ground acts more like a liquid. When this happens, the ground can no longer support the weight of a building. In coastal areas, earthquakes under the sea floor can cause tsunamis.*