

Great Shakeout Earthquake Drill

November 13

Instructor - Please read this notice to your class

At 10:00 a.m. today, USC's students, faculty, and staff are taking part in the largest earthquake drill in U.S. history. The event, organized with assistance from USC's Southern California Earthquake Center and the campus emergency planning office, is based on a magnitude 7.8 earthquake forecast for the San Andreas Fault.

At 10:00 a.m., we are going to take a moment to practice the earthquake safety procedure, which is to DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON. In a big earthquake, the main hazard will be objects such as bookcases, light fixtures, equipment, or other heavy items falling.

The safest thing to do during the earthquake is to drop down, get under a desk or table, and hold on until the earthquake stops. Do not panic and run. There is no need to get in a doorway. In a hallway, just move away from windows and drop down near an interior wall, protecting the back of your head and neck.

Let's just take a moment to practice - everybody drop, cover, and hold on for 30 seconds.

Be sure to drop, cover, and hold on the moment you feel the initial jolt of the earthquake starting. If you wait until the quake gets stronger it may be too late.

If you follow this procedure, you will stay safe from injury in a major earthquake.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT

- When the earthquake stops, we will check on each other to make sure no one is injured. If anyone does sustain an injury we will get help from DPS (213.740.4321), and from our building emergency team or other trained teams on campus.
- If the earthquake is major and the building appears to be damaged or unsafe, we will leave the building and go to an open area well away from the building. After an earthquake we only use stairwells, never elevators.
- Campus emergency teams will provide direction on what to do next, and emergency services will be established as needed by USC.
- After a major earthquake, USC information can be obtained at <http://emergency.usc.edu>, or by calling 213.740.9233.
- I recommend each of you maintain a small emergency kit with flashlight, batteries, AM/FM radio, a little food & water, and a small amount of first aid supplies.
- I also recommend you sign up for the USC emergency notification system at <http://trojansalert.usc.edu>

Earthquake Safety/Emergency Preparedness - Frequently Asked Questions

Are there some situations where the drop-cover-hold on response might be incorrect, and perhaps another response is appropriate?

No, Drop-cover-hold on is always the correct procedure in California earthquakes. It will protect you from falling objects that are the most likely cause of injury. Trying to run during an earthquake is the perfect way to get injured.

But what about in a parking structure or other building that is likely to collapse?

Any building can collapse in a major earthquake, but all USC buildings are built to codes that require both strength and flexibility. In most cases the problem is not building collapse, but falling objects. Even in the unlikely event that a building collapses, it would be extremely unsafe to try and run out of the building, where you will be hit by falling debris. Even if the ceiling comes down, you still need to drop and cover. You will be protected under a sturdy desk, and can survive in that "void" until rescued.

Should we evacuate our building after an earthquake?

It depends.

Major earthquake, major building damage, smell of smoke, smell of natural gas, or other hazards	EVACUATE
Minor earthquake, little or no visible damage, no other hazards	STAY

In a life-threatening emergency, should I call 911 instead of 740-4321?

Always call 213.740.4321, especially in a life-threatening emergency. When you call 911 from campus, the address does not show on the city dispatch screen, and it takes much longer for the responding unit to find you on campus. One of our DPS officers can be at your location in minutes, and we also help to guide the fire engine, ambulance or other unit directly to you location. In addition, when you call 911 from a cell phone, the call is actually routed to the California Highway Patrol dispatch in most areas, resulting in even more delays. By far the best way to ensure life safety is to always call 740-4321, and only call 911 if you can't get through to the USC dispatch.