



OCTOBER SAFETY TALK

www.bcmsa.ca

Topic: Earthquake Preparedness

The Great Canadian Shake-Out happens in the second week of October. More than 40 million people participate in this event each year, with close to a million in BC.

As they say – practice makes perfect!

Do you know what to do in the event of an Earthquake?



You cannot tell from the initial shaking how severe an earthquake could be – so always:

DROP to the ground (before the earthquake drops you!).

COVER your head and neck and seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk, if nearby.

HOLD ON to your shelter and be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.

If there is no table or desk near you, drop to the ground and then if possible move to an inside corner of the room. Be in a crawling position to protect your vital organs and be ready to move if necessary, and always cover your head and neck with your hands and arms. Do not move

to another location or outside. You are more likely to be injured if you try to move around during strong shaking.

The main point is to not try to move but to **immediately protect yourself** as best as possible where you are. Earthquakes occur without any warning and may be so violent that you cannot run or crawl; you therefore will most likely be knocked to the ground where you happen to be. You will never know if the initial jolt will turn out to be start of the Big One. You should Drop, Cover, and Hold On immediately!

In addition, studies of injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes over the last several decades indicate that you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects (TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases, etc.) than to die in a collapsed building. Drop, Cover, and Hold On offers the best overall level of protection in most situations.

Take a look around your worksite. What is there that could injure you in an earthquake?

Are there framed pictures, or plants, above your head? Do you have a bookcase or credenza nearby? Is it secured against tipping? Your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee may be performing regular inspections and identifying these issues, but you should also take a look and assess any hazards in your work area.

If you are unable to Drop, Cover, and Hold On:

If you have difficulty getting safely to the floor on your own, get as low as possible, protect your head and neck, and move away from windows or other items that can fall on you.

MYTH: Head for the doorway

Doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house, and do not provide protection from falling or flying objects. You are safer under a table.

For more information – including what to do if an earthquake strikes while you are in bed, driving, or at the shoreline – see www.shakeoutbc.ca

