



## Keeping Workers Safe in an Earthquake

### Ensure Readiness Through Preparation

You can minimize the chances of employee injuries and deaths through earthquake preparation. These preventive measures should be in place at your organization:

- Have your facility inspected for structural soundness. Repair any cracks in walls and ceilings, as well as any other structural problems.
- Secure tabletop objects, such as computers and lamps, with safety straps attached to the desktop or with hook-and-loop fasteners glued to the desk or table and the unit.
- Secure all top-heavy furniture, such as bookcases and file cabinets, to the wall. Anchor to the stud, not just to the plasterboard.
- Use flexible fasteners, such as nylon straps, that allow tall objects to sway without falling over. This reduces strain on the studs.
- Replace existing windows with those made from safety glass, or cover them with a strong, shatter-resistant safety film.
- Support ceiling lights and fans with a cable bolted to the ceiling joist. The cable should provide enough slack to allow them to sway.
- Framed objects, especially glass covered ones, should be hung from closed hooks so they cannot bounce off walls.
- Review and refresh your first-aid and emergency provisions. Your stash should include water, dry food, a fire extinguisher, portable radios, and flashlights with batteries.
- Designate evacuation routes that avoid the most likely hazards, and be sure to consider disabled employees' needs in your plan.
- Hold regular practice drills to make more employees know what to do during and after an earthquake.
- Establish emergency communication procedures, including key contacts for employees. These should be readily available – posted by phones, for example.
- Establish contacts with emergency responders, including police, fire, and emergency services departments.
- Install seismic switches for automatic equipment shutdown, as well as surge protection and battery backup systems to protect sensitive systems.