

## WHAT IS AN EARTHQUAKE?

An earthquake is caused by the constant motion of the earth's surface. It is the sudden shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rocks beneath the earth's surface. Many islands, like Jamaica, are in an earthquake zone and will experience earthquakes every now and then.

The threat of an earthquake is with us all the time! Earthquakes have no particular season and no one knows exactly when one will occur.

Therefore, it is important that we take the time to prepare ourselves NOW so that we will know what to do and how to respond when the next great shake takes place.

## TIPS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**1 Learn about earthquakes.** Better protect yourself, your family, and/or your business, learn what earthquakes are all about. An earthquake strikes without warning.

**2 Create a disaster plan.** Outline the steps to take if an earthquake should occur. Being prepared for disasters is everyone's responsibility!

**3 Conduct regular earthquake drills & building inspections.** Drills should be conducted at least twice per year. This will ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of an earthquake. In addition, buildings should be inspected for hazards before and after an earthquake.

**4 Take cover & remain calm!** If you are inside a building during an earthquake stay there and take cover under a sturdy object such as a strong doorway, desk or table. Watch out for falling objects. DO NOT rush outside! Try to remain calm, if you do, you are less likely to be injured.

**5 If you are outside.** Try to stay away from high-rise buildings, walls, light poles or other structures that may fall. If possible go to an open area away from anything that could fall and cause injury.

**6 If you are in a vehicle.** Stop in the safest possible open area and remain in the vehicle.

### AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE DO'S & DON'TS

- DO** Evacuate the building once the shaking stops.
- DO** Turn off ALL appropriate utilities.
- DO** Collect & store water safely.
- DO** Stay away from buildings that may have been weakened.
- DO** Check for spilt liquids, especially those that are flammable.
- DO** Check your home/business for damage.
- DO** Keep battery powered radios on and listen for bulletins.
- DON'T** Light a match or turn on a light switch. Use a flashlight instead.
- DON'T** Touch fallen power lines or electrical wires.
- DON'T** Go sightseeing! Instead leave the streets clear for emergency and rescue workers.
- DON'T** Use the telephone except in an emergency.
- DON'T** Attempt to move seriously injured persons.

# PLAN AN EARTHQUAKE DRILL

## STEP 1 ALARM

During the Alarm stage those involved in the drill are alerted by a loud warning device, such as a bell or buzzer.

## STEP 2 RESPONSE

During the response phase, everyone should move away from windows, glass and/or light fixtures and take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or object. If there is no cover available, crouch and try to protect your head.



## STEP 3 EVACUATION

After remaining in your respective “safe place” after the shaking has stopped, persons should then evacuate the building. The evacuation proceeds through pre-determined safe routes and evacuees gather outside in a safe area.



## STEP 4 ASSEMBLY

At the assembly point, evacuees are grouped in order of classrooms, departments or floors (whichever is convenient) to facilitate the roll-call process.

## STEP 5 ROLL CALL

During the roll call, teachers, floor wardens, or other designated representatives determine if everyone is present. In the event of a real earthquake, a search and rescue team would be dispatched to look for missing persons.

## STEP 6 EVALUATION

After the roll call, there should be an evaluation where the institution identifies “snags” or gaps in the drill to facilitate future improvement.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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# Are you ready for an EARTHQUAKE?



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