



WASHINGTON STATE SEISMIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

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Dear Educator,

Washington State is Earthquake Country. While this may not be news to you, it is a fact of life that we tend to forget since we do not experience earthquakes on a regular basis. It is crucial that all of us know how to respond appropriately when the time comes and we feel the ground begin to shake. Experts across Washington State and throughout the world recommend one method to protect yourself during an earthquake: Drop, Cover, and Hold.

To reduce your chance of injury during an earthquake:

DROP to the ground onto your hands and knees - This protects you from falling or getting knocked off your feet from the shaking and still allows you to move.

- **COVER - take cover by getting under a sturdy table or desk.** If there is no shelter close by, you should get down near an interior wall. **Cover** your head and neck with your arm.
- **HOLD on to the table/desk leg to keep it safely over you.** Be prepared to move with your shelter.

WHY EXPERTS RECOMMEND DROP, COVER, AND HOLD:

- **Trying to move during shaking puts you at risk:** Earthquakes occur without any warning and may be so violent that you cannot run or crawl. You will most likely be knocked to the ground. "Drop, Cover, and Hold" gives you the best overall chance of quickly protecting yourself during an earthquake.
- **The greatest danger is from falling and flying objects:** Numerous studies of earthquake related injuries and deaths over the past several years show that you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects than to die in a collapsed building. "Drop, Cover, and Hold" will protect you from most of these injuries.

WHAT EXPERTS RECOMMEND YOU DO NOT DO DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:

- **DO NOT run outside or to other rooms during shaking:** The area near the exterior walls of a building is the most dangerous place to be. Windows, bricks, and architectural features may be the first parts of the building to break or fall.
- **DO NOT stand in a doorway:** In today's houses, most doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. The doorway does not protect you from the falling or flying objects and may cause injury if it slams shut on your hands.
- **DO NOT get in the "triangle of life" position:** In recent years, an e-mail has been widely circulating which describes an alternative to the long-established "Drop, Cover, and Hold" procedures. This so-called "triangle of life" and some of the other actions recommended in the e-mail are potentially life threatening. The credibility of the source of these recommendations has been broadly questioned by many professional engineering, disaster response, and emergency management agencies.

We hope you will take this opportunity to spread the word to your students, faculty, staff, and parents that "Drop, Cover, and Hold" is the right move to make during an earthquake. For additional information on earthquake safety and preparedness, please visit <http://www.emd.wa.gov>.

Sincerely,

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