

EARTHQUAKE

Description

The University is located in the Central Virginia Seismic Zone. Since at least 1774, people in central Virginia have felt small earthquakes and suffered damage from infrequent larger ones. The largest damaging earthquake (magnitude 5.8) in the seismic zone occurred in August 2011. Smaller earthquakes that cause little or no damage are felt each year or two.

Most injuries occur when people inside buildings try to move to a different location in the building or try to leave. The area near the exterior walls of a building is the most dangerous place to be. Windows, facades and architectural details are often the first parts of the building to collapse. To stay away from this danger zone, stay inside if you are inside and outside if you are outside. Injuries can be avoided if you drop to the ground before the earthquake drops you.

Immediate Action

If you are indoors:

- Stay inside until the shaking stops.
- DROP to the ground; take COVER by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and HOLD ON until the shaking stops. If there is not a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- If you are in bed when the earthquake strikes, stay there. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- Do not use the elevators.

If you are outdoors:

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops.

If you are in a moving vehicle:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.
- If you are in a stadium or amphitheater, stay at your seat and protect your head and neck with your arms. Do not try to leave until the shaking is over. Then walk out slowly watching for anything that could fall in the aftershocks.

Decision

- After the shaking has stopped, evaluate your surroundings:
- Look for safety hazards such as fire, smoke, smell of gas or fumes, dangerous debris or obvious structural damage.
- Look for injured or trapped persons.
- If you are in a building and there are no obvious hazards do not evacuate.
- If the structural integrity of your building is compromised or your surroundings are hazardous, evacuate. Use the stairs.
- Determine if emergency responders are needed. If yes, call 911
- Determine if the building needs to be evaluated for damage. If yes, contact Facilities Management at 924-1777. Facilities Management will deploy personnel for damage assessments.

Subsequent Procedures / Information

Expect aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures and can occur in the first hours, days, weeks, or even months after the quake.

- Take steps to account for people. Gather at designated assembly areas and determine if everyone is present including employees and guests.
- If the building was evacuated, there should be an evaluation of the building to address damage. Do not re-enter building until this has been completed.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for the latest emergency information. The University operating status will be posted on www.virginia.edu and <http://statusboard.uvaemergency.virginia.edu>.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested.
- Inspect your space for damage. Report damage to your supervisor.
- Open cabinets cautiously; beware of objects that can fall off shelves.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately if you are trained to do so. Leave the area and call 911 if you smell natural gas or fumes from other chemicals. Call Environmental Health and Safety at 982-4911 (or 911 after hours) for assistance if needed.