



Earthquake Preparedness

Chances are that if you were at work on February 28th, 2001, you felt the earth move. OHSU was subject to the earthquake that originated just south of Seattle, but only felt a small portion of the 6.8 magnitude quake locally.

Shortly after the incident, OHSU Facilities Management personnel methodically went through OHSU buildings, both on and off the hill, and found no significant damage, and there were no reported injuries. We fared quite well, but it does bring up the question, **“How well-prepared is OHSU for a larger earthquake?”**

Structurally speaking, we are in pretty good shape. OHSU buildings are in various stages of reinforcement for such an event. Substantial portions of the work have already been completed, and new projects incorporate preparedness technologies from the start.

The most important component of preparedness is education. Make sure that you know what to do in case of an earthquake:

- Stay inside during an earthquake. One of the greatest hazards outside is falling debris from building facades. If you are outside, move away from buildings, street lights, and overhead utility lines.
- Take cover under a piece of heavy furniture, stand against an inside wall, or move into a doorway. These structures help protect you from interior overhead hazards like falling ceiling tile. Expect aftershocks!
- After the shaking stops, check yourself and others for injuries. Check in with your supervisor for specific instructions.
- In patient care areas, make sure that critical equipment is plugged into red, emergency power outlets.

To ensure earthquake preparedness, check your area for:

- Unsecured bookcases, shelving units, or overhead hazards that might fall during shaking. Have Facilities Management secure these to the floor or wall;
- Working flashlights in case of power outage;
- Chemicals and other material inventories that may slide off shelves or racks and cause further hazards. Routinely close cabinet doors and install safety rails on open shelves.

For other information and tips regarding earthquake preparedness, contact Environmental Health and Safety at 503-494-7795.

