

# *Are You Ready For The Big One?*

by

**State Compensation Insurance Fund**

**E**arthquakes aren't planned, but in California, a 6.7 magnitude or greater earthquake is predicted in the next 30 years. An earthquake that size can cause personal injuries, strain public services, and disrupt business. The best way for a business to survive an earthquake is to have a plan, be prepared, and review emergency procedures with workers.

Businesses must have an emergency evacuation plan that details for workers how to evacuate their building, where to assemble, how to account for everyone, and how to get further instructions to act. Current emergency contact phone numbers for all workers and management are critical. Businesses should also list and prioritize their functions in a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that ensures access to the people, materials, and other supplies needed to continue business operation.

Survey each workspace to assure that heavy items are stored at lower heights or secured so they won't fall. Furniture such as bookshelves and file cabinets along with storage racks and shelving should be strapped or attached to the wall to keep it stable and upright. Keep doors, exits, and aisles clear at all times for quick access evacuations. Keep areas under desks and tables uncluttered to make room to take cover in an earthquake. Large equipment such as boilers, tanks, and machines need to be secured properly so they will not fall over in an earthquake.

Gather emergency supplies for the workplace. Fire extinguishers should be charged and inspected monthly for ready use. Periodically test fire alarms, sprinklers, and emergency lighting. Keep flashlights, a radio, extra batteries, and a first aid kit on hand at all times. Consider stockpiling food, water, blankets, and sanitary supplies such as toilet paper and portable toilets. Keep enough supplies for the number of workers that may need to shelter or work at your facility after an earthquake. Encourage workers to prepare personal emergency supplies for their use and in their car, including comfortable clothes and shoes, a flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, food, water, and necessary medications.

Finally, train and review all emergency procedures including evacuations. Provide training on first aid and CPR techniques. Teach workers how to protect themselves during an earthquake whether in a building, in a car, or on the street. Finally, practice business recovery procedures by inspecting and restarting equipment and computers in order of priority. ••