EARTHQUAKES

Washington is earthquake country! When the ground starts to shake
"Drop, Cover and Hold."

Be Prepared for an Earthquake

- ✓ Make sure you have a 72 hour disaster supplies kit.
- ✓ Anchor appliances and tall, heavy furniture that might fall. Put latches on cabinet doors to keep contents from spilling out.
- ✓ Secure water heaters and gas appliances using steel straps.
- ✓ Place heavy objects on lower shelves.
- ✓ Establish an out-of-area contact and keep the phone numbers handy. This is the person family members will call if you are separated.
- ✓ Have a place in your home where emergency supplies are kept and make sure all family members know where it is located.
- ✓ Conduct practice drills with your children so they know safe places to drop, cover and hold.

An earthquake is a sudden movement of the earth's surface resulting from the movement of faults beneath the Earth's upper crust.

During an Earthquake

If you are indoors:

- ✓ Stay inside! Move under a desk or sturdy table and hold onto it. If it moves, move with it.
- ✓ Stay away from windows, bookcases, refrigerators, or any other heavy objects that could fall.
- ✓ If you are in a public place, **do not** rush for an exit. Move away from shelves holding objects that could fall, then "drop, cover and hold".

All regions of Washington State have a history of earthquake activity. More than 1,000 earthquakes are registered in Washington each year.

If you are outdoors:

- ✓ Move to a clear area away from trees, signs, buildings or downed electrical wires and poles.
- ✓ If you are on a sidewalk near a tall building, get into a building's doorway or lobby to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass and other debris.

If you are driving:

- ✓ Slowly pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops.

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After the Earthquake

- ✓ Check yourself and those around you for injuries.
- ✓ Be prepared for aftershocks.
- ✓ If you were evacuated, wait until you are told it is safe before returning home.
- ✓ Be careful entering buildings and stay away from downed power lines.
- ✓ Use the phone only to report a life-threatening emergency.
- ✓ Check for safety hazards: gas, water, sewage breaks and downed power lines.

History of Earthquakes in Cowlitz County
April 13, 1949—A 7.1 earthquake occurred with an epicenter in Olympia.
April 29, 1965—A 6.5 earthquake occurred with an epicenter in Renton.
March 25, 1993—Spring Break Quake, 5.6 earthquake epicenter in Mt. Angel, OR.
May 2, 1996—A 5.4 earthquake epicenter in Duvall, WA.
July 2, 1999—Satsop Earthquake, 5.9 magnitude with an epicenter in Satsop, WA.
February 28, 2001—Nisqually Earthquake, 6.8 magnitude with an epicenter in Olympia. Strong ground shaking was felt in Cowlitz County. Damage in the county included: ✓ Lower Columbia College reported minor cracks in buildings. ✓ City of Kelso reported a water line break. ✓ Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue reported a crack in their hose tower and in Lexington Station. ✓ City of Kalama incurred damage to two of their main water reservoirs.

Can earthquakes be predicted?

No. Neither the USGS nor any other scientists have ever predicted a major earthquake. They do not know how, and they do not expect to know any time in the foreseeable future. However based on scientific data, probabilities can be calculated for potential future earthquakes. For example, scientists estimate that over the next 30 years the probability of a major EQ occurring in the San Francisco Bay area is 67% and 60% in Southern California.

The USGS focuses their efforts on the long-term mitigation of earthquake hazards by helping to improve the safety of structures, rather than by trying to accomplish short-term predictions.

Links:

Facts about Earthquake Insurance:
http://www.insurance.wa.gov/factsheets/

Pacific Northwest Seismic Network website:
http://www.ess.washington.edu/recenteqs/latest.htm

United States Geological Society website:
http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learning/facts.php