

Marin County **BE PREPARED**

POPULAR EARTHQUAKE MYTHS

The common myths regarding earthquake preparedness and response can lead to disastrous consequences. Please educate yourself and your loved ones, visit <http://usgs.gov>

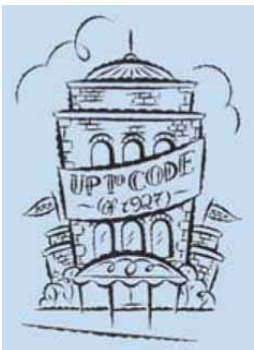


Myth 1: "BEACHFRONT PROPERTY"?

The idea or myth of California sliding into the Pacific Ocean in an earthquake and creating new beachfront property to the east appeals to those having a bit of fun at the Golden State's expense. Although part of the State west of the San Andreas Fault system is very slowly moving northward and in millions of years could become an island, earthquakes caused by this horizontal motion of the Earth's tectonic plates will not make California disappear into the sea, like fabled Atlantis.

Myth 2: "HEAD FOR THE DOORWAY!"

In the early days of California, many homes were made of adobe bricks with wooden doorframes. After a powerful earthquake, doorframes were sometimes only parts of these houses still standing. From this came the myth that a doorway is the safest place to be during an earthquake. Today, few people in the Bay Area live in old, unreinforced adobe houses. In modern houses, doorways may be no stronger than any other part of the house and do little to protect you from falling debris. You are safer under a table, so **"DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON."**



Myth 3: "WE HAVE GOOD BUILDING CODES, SO WE MUST HAVE SAFE BUILDINGS."

The best building code in the world does nothing for buildings built before the code was enacted. Although building codes used in California have some of the strictest seismic provisions in the world, many older buildings have not been "retrofitted" to meet updated codes. Retrofitting—fixing problems in older buildings—is the responsibility of a building's owner.



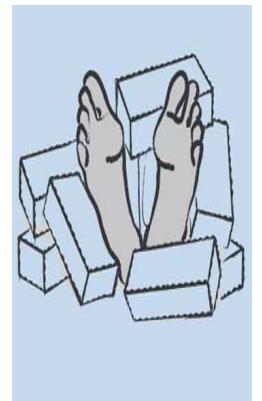
Myth 4: "AND THE EARTH OPENED..."

A popular literary device is a fault that opens during an earthquake and then closes to swallow up an inconvenient character. Unfortunately for principled writers, such "carnivorous" faults exist only in novels and B-movies.



Myth 5: "I DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT EARTHQUAKES—THE GOVERNMENT WILL SAVE ME!"

Many people wrongly believe that the U.S. Government will take care of all their financial needs if they suffer losses in an earthquake. The truth is that Federal disaster assistance is only available if the President formally declares a disaster. Even if you do get disaster assistance, it is usually a loan that you must repay, with interest, in addition to mortgages and other financial obligations you still owe, even on damaged property. If you don't qualify for loans, grants may be available to you. However, these are only designed to meet your most immediate needs, not to replace your losses.



Myth 6: "QUAKE INJURIES ARE ALL FROM COLLAPSING BUILDINGS."

Many people think that all injuries in earthquakes are caused by collapsing buildings. Actually, most injuries in quakes are from objects that break or fall on people. For example, in the 1994 magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake, 55% of quake-related injuries were caused by falling objects, such as televisions, pictures and mirrors, and heavy light fixtures.



Myth 7: "HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE WILL COVER ANY DAMAGE TO MY HOME OR BELONGINGS CAUSED BY AN EARTHQUAKE."

Most residential property insurance policies do not cover damage resulting from earthquakes. A separate earthquake insurance policy is one way to protect your home and the investments you have made in personal belongings. Investigate your options carefully to ensure that your assets are sufficiently protected (see <http://earthquakeauthority.com>)

* Information compiled from the U.S. Geological Survey's report, "Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country" Available on their website at <http://usgs.gov> *

