



## Occupational Health and Safety topic for the month of October

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE – EARTHQUAKE

### What is Earthquake

An earthquake is the movement of earth's crust triggered by the collision of tectonic plates or volcanic activities. Earthquakes are devastating. Even at low magnitudes, earthquakes can cause heavy or tall items to fall or topple over resulting in damage to property, equipment and machinery, and even casualty to people. Earthquakes can:

- Generate a tsunami
- Cause severe landslide in mountainous areas
- Generate volcanic eruption
- Cause heavy or tall items to fall (e.g., heavy items to fall off shelves, structural collapse)

### Earthquake Preparedness

Earthquakes strike suddenly without warning. Papua New Guinea is located in one of the world's most active tectonic settings with over 100 earthquakes of magnitude five or greater occur each year. PNG experiences small to large earthquakes frequently, and severely damaging earthquake occurs every few years. Therefore, preparedness in response to earthquake and its associated impacts is vital in our workplace.

Here are several actions to consider in preparation and response to earthquake in workplace;

- Identify and report structural failures in the building
- Do not overtake shelves
- Know your emergency exit
- Participate in safety and evacuation drills
- Know your emergency contacts

### During an Earthquake

Stay calm, observe the earthquake and move to a safe area.

#### When Inside a Building

- Stay inside – do not attempt to run outside. However, be prepared for aftershock and evacuate when necessary. Listen to instructions from authority or Area Warden.
- Take cover under a sturdy table or desk against an inside wall away from overhead fittings and shelves containing heavy objects
- When inside a high-rise building, stay away from windows and outer walls. Never use the elevator
- When inside crowded public place (e.g., terminal building), try not to panic. Do not attempt to barge at the door.

#### When Outside

- Keep well clear of buildings, power poles and lines, trees, etc. and stay in the open. Do not attempt to seek shelter in a building
- Stay where you are and wait for the shaking to stop
- If you are near slopes, cliffs or mountains, be aware of falling rocks and possibility of landslides

#### When Driving

- Pull to the side of the road away from traffic, power lines and road signs
- Avoid stopping on or under bridges
- Stay in your seat with seatbelts fastened until the shaking stops
- When resume driving, beware of possible damage to the road.

### After an Earthquake

- Check yourself for injuries before providing assistance to others that are injured. Apply first aid if you have training
- Do not enter damaged building, go outside and quickly move away from the building
- If you are in an area that may experience tsunami, go inland or to higher ground immediately after the shaking stops
- Once safe, monitor local news reports via radio, TV, social media, and cell phone text alerts for emergency information and instruction
- Stay calm and lend a hand to other if possible.

**Natural Disasters occur without warning. Preparedness boosts confidence in response and provides roadmap to recovery.**

You can obtain more information on earthquake preparedness, response and recovery through:

**National Disaster Centre**  
P. O. Box 4970,  
BOROKO, NCD  
Ph: 3014710/3014711  
Email: [info@pngndc.gov.pg](mailto:info@pngndc.gov.pg)

**Port Moresby Geophysical Observatory**  
P. O. Box 323,  
Port Moresby, NCD  
Ph: 3214500

Report all OH&S Hazards including accidents and near misses to OHS on [ohs@nac.com.pg](mailto:ohs@nac.com.pg)

**AUTHORIZED BY: MANAGEMENT**

**ISSUED BY: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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