



Earthquake Safety in Labs

Before an Earthquake:

Do a **risk assessment** of your work/study area to determine the best course of action to take in the event of an earthquake. Lab supervisors should conduct a risk assessment of their labs and communicate the results to those who work there. When conducting your risk assessment, please consider the following:

- ❖ Assess what hazards would be present in your lab during an earthquake.
- ❖ **Pre- identify safe areas** within your lab where you will try to take cover. Consider 2-3 areas that you can quickly crawl to and that are away from:
 - Benches or heavy equipment that could move or shift during an earthquake
 - Hazardous materials or objects that are not secured
 - Breakable items and windows
- ❖ Ensure wheels on equipment and carts are in the locked position
- ❖ If you identify areas of concern during your risk assessment, be sure to **take action** to remedy problems as soon as possible.

During an Earthquake:

Always follow the internationally recognized **Drop, Cover, Hold-on** safety technique but consider how you may need to adapt this technique based on where you are at the time of the shaking and the results of your risk assessment.

- ❖ If you are in a place where the bench areas have been deemed hazardous, based on the risk assessment, **drop** to the ground so you are not knocked over by the shaking and then quickly move to one of your pre-identified safe locations (i.e. the ends of the bench or to the front of the room away from windows)
- ❖ No matter where you are **cover** your head and neck with your arms and **hold on** to a stable object in the room so you are not knocked over in violent shaking

After an Earthquake:

- ❖ Move cautiously as objects may have shifted in the shaking and may pose obstacles to maneuvering around the room
- ❖ Turn off gas or other valves (if possible these should be turned off as soon as any shaking is felt)
- ❖ If there are known hazardous materials in the room that may have been released during the earthquake, evacuate the area immediately but move cautiously.
- ❖ Move outdoors away from buildings as **aftershocks may occur**.
- ❖ Do not re-enter the building until it has had a damage assessment and been given the ok by First Responders, Facilities, health and safety and security staff.
- ❖ Make sure you **check in** with the building evacuation coordinator/fire warden or your supervisor before leaving the area so that you can be accounted for and so they know you are safe.

Labs at SFU are varied and therefore you must look at the unique aspects of your lab to determine the safest way to protect yourself during an earthquake. The internationally recognized approach of “**Drop, Cover, and Hold on**” should still be followed; however, moving to the end of a lab bench or to the perimeter of the lab may increase safety during an earthquake, depending on the specific hazards present in your lab.

For more information about Earthquake Safety visit: <http://www.sfu.ca/srs/emergency/response.html>