

Emergency response to a quake



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An earthquake, the result of a sudden release of energy in the Earth's crust, can be due to either a natural phenomenon or human activity. The ravaging activities on the womb of the mother earth like drilling, blasting, digging and establishing coal mines, oil fields, Uranium extractions are posing a life threat to the very existence of mother earth. and South East Asia and as such Assam is definitely threatened. Large oil pipelines passing through the heart of the guwahati city and suction pumps of high velocity is delicately adding woes to worry and we Guwahatians are spending sleepless nights The energy that gets released in an earthquake reads from 1 - 10 on the Richter scale. Those with a magnitude reading of 3 or lower are almost unnoticeable. Earthquakes that reach a magnitude of 7 generally cause serious damage over large areas. Earthquakes are recognizable by the shaking and movement of the ground which can also trigger landslides, volcanic activity and tsunamis. Large earthquakes cause many serious problems to the surrounding land and its inhabitants. They can result in disease, the loss of basic necessities (such as food, water, shelter, warmth) an increase in insurance premiums due to destruction of property, roads, bridges, etc., the collapse or destabilization of buildings, and worst of all, the loss of human, animal and plant life. Although some areas of the world are more prone to earthquakes than others, earthquakes can occur anywhere and should be a concern to everyone. Earthquake preparedness refers to measures that have been designed to help individuals, businesses, and governments in these areas to prepare for significant earthquakes. There are a number of precautions that individuals, schools and businesses can take to minimize the risks from an earthquake: 1. Have a 72-hour emergency supply kit within easy reach (near the front door, in the car trunk, near the office desk) 2. Set up an emergency exit plan and practice it on a regular basis (once a month is recommended). This could include a neighborhood evacuation plan as well. 3. Bookshelves and other furniture that could fall should be securely fixed to strong wood studs in the wall, using heavy screws. 4. Heavy or dangerous objects should be moved to lower areas 5. Use fluorescent bulbs instead of halogen or incandescent ones to minimize the risk of fire 6. Have close access to battery powered flashlights (and batteries) everywhere in the home, school or office 7. Have a crank radio on hand for updates on emergency conditions 8. Know how to shut off the gas (and possibly water) supply and have an appropriate wrench near the valve(s) 9. Have several fire extinguishers available and be sure you know how to use them 10. All adults should be trained in basic medical first aid. Earthquakes occur nearly constantly around the world in places like Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, the United States and Japan. Assam belongs to one of the quake prone zones of the world-

Zone V. Many people are caught unprepared and thus suffer the consequences. There are a few important safety measures that should be taken during an earthquake: 1. If possible, get under a table or desk, hold onto a table/desk leg and close your eyes 2. If there is no cover, sit close to a wall away from windows, furniture or anything else that could fall on you 3. Stay in your spot until the shaking is over (this may include smaller aftershocks) 4. Check yourself and others nearby for injuries, being careful to avoid objects that may have fallen around you 5. Watch out for fire. 6. Use the stairs when having to evacuate a building (never use the elevator) 7. If outside, stay away from buildings, trees, power lines, etc., crouch down, cover your head and close your eyes

Individuals, schools and businesses in earthquake areas are encouraged to have an emergency kit available with enough supplies for 72 hours (3 days). This is considered the amount of time it usually takes for emergency services to react fully to an emergency situation. Of course, emergency survival kits are a must to have in any disaster situation. Roads, lanes and by lanes should be wide enough for any kind of emergency rescue operations. It is also safer to use materials, for construction and for all other purposes, that has the highest coefficient of elasticity. Wood (Bamboo), rubber, plastic and sponge have very good elastic properties and their coefficient of elasticity is very high. Their use should be maximized for all purposes- construction and others. Roads, lanes and by lanes should be wide enough for any kind of emergency rescue operations. Bedabrata Das

editor

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