



# *Earthquake checklist*

*'Helping our customers stay in business by reducing risk'*

**NZI Risk Solutions™**

## About NZI Risk Solutions

*NZI has extensive experience in providing expert risk management advice to help our commercial customers remain in business. We have used this industry knowledge and developed a suite of fact sheets covering risk management issues to help you take control of your business risks.*

# Earthquake checklist

An earthquake cannot be prevented or predicted with any certainty. To help protect your business, we've developed the following checklist which outlines some of the important steps you might consider to reduce the risk of damage and financial loss, resulting from an earthquake.

### Before an earthquake event

Firstly, conduct your own assessment of the earthquake risk to your business. Check your building for any signs of large cracks in walls, around parapets or along columns and beams.

Discuss any existing issues with a qualified seismic engineering consultant. This is particularly important in terms of the structure of your building and ultimately the safety of people working in it.



### Practical actions you can take are:

- ✓ Develop a comprehensive Emergency Action Plan to minimize damage, activate salvage and repair operations and lessen the impact of business interruption following an earthquake.
- ✓ Maintain a formal Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- ✓ Provide and train an Emergency Response Team (ERT) covering all shifts to implement the emergency action plan and stockpile emergency supplies that may be needed to support the ERT.
- ✓ Evaluate the loss exposure to the business (building and contents) of items overturning, sliding, swinging, falling or rupturing.
- ✓ Implement an anchorage/bracing policy for contents and storage facilities and building services to prevent or mitigate damage.
- ✓ Move heavier items to lower storage shelves.
- ✓ Anchor items to the floor and adjacent walls to prevent overturning.
- ✓ Group items together and bolt or brace them to each other
- ✓ Test for and correct deficiencies that could result in electrical arcing near combustible materials.
- ✓ Provide back-up water supplies for fire fighting.
- ✓ Install seismically activated automatic shut-off valves for hazardous liquid and gas distribution systems.



### After an earthquake event

Preserving life is paramount – make sure that you can move about safely before taking the following steps, to mitigate loss or damage:

- ✓ Implement your Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- ✓ Check fire extinguishers and hose reels are operational.
- ✓ Check process and manufacturing systems, gas, water and electrical systems for damage. Shut off as necessary.
- ✓ As fire is a major concern following an earthquake, check the premises thoroughly to ensure no combustible materials have come into contact with ignition sources.
- ✓ Check that all sprinkler water supply valves are open and water supply is in service (unless they have been damaged and are leaking).
- ✓ Check for any damage to burglary protection and fire alarm systems.
- ✓ Secure all buildings against unlawful entry.
- ✗ Do not allow 'Hot Work' until fire protection is restored.

**"You should prepare for an earthquake. New Zealand's recent earthquake history has heightened awareness of the risk of harm from buildings and associated failures in the event of earthquakes. Employers and owners of buildings need to prepare for emergencies. Both need to work together to ensure emergency plans work and people are safe during emergencies"** – WorkSafe NZ

### Aftershock improvisation

Improvisation may provide some useful short-term gains, especially in the context of aftershocks. Be prepared and stock these items now:

- ✓ Commercial grade Velcro strips and pads for securing equipment on horizontal surfaces. Note this is very strong in horizontal applications but not vertical applications.
- ✓ Good quality adhesive tape to keep cupboard doors closed – especially those with magnetic catches.
- ✓ Shock cord to keep refrigerator and freestanding cupboard doors closed and items on shelves.
- ✓ Ratchet ties for rafting together cabinets and shelves, or groups of appliances.
- ✓ Adhesive packaging tape for loose cylindrical objects e.g. bottles, cans, aerosols etc – tape together in small rafts and store on longest side.
- ✓ Plastic sheeting to cover items likely to sustain damage from water leaks.

### Take control

We hope you find this information useful and we encourage you to manage your business risks by implementing these risk control measures.

To find out more about how you can protect your business, WorkSafe NZ offer free information, tools and resources. Alternatively, your business could subscribe to Standards NZ for more detailed information.

[www.nzi.co.nz](http://www.nzi.co.nz)

These guidelines are of a general nature only. They are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the steps you should consider taking to reduce the risk of damage and financial loss resulting from an earthquake, nor is it intended to be legal advice.

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