



Earthquake Safety in Labs

Before an Earthquake:

Walk around your work area to identify the best approach to take in the event of an earthquake. As research and teaching labs have potential additional risks due to hazardous materials, glass and heavy equipment, consider the following:

- **Pre-identify safe areas** within your lab where you will try to take cover. Consider 2-3 areas that you can quickly move to that are away from:
 - Hazardous materials or objects that are not secured
 - Breakable items and windows
 - Benches that could move or shift during an earthquake
- Make sure all gas cylinders are secure
- Store heavy objects close to the floor (not where they could fall on you)
- Ensure wheels are in the locked position on all wheeled equipment

During an Earthquake:

Always follow the **DROP, COVER, HOLD ON** earthquake response procedures. Consider how you may need to adapt this technique based on where you are at the time of the shaking and your proximity to nearby hazards.

- If you are in a place where the bench areas are hazardous, **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. under the lab bench, 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 during violent shaking.

As labs at UVic are varied in layout & materials used, look at the unique aspects of the lab you work in to determine the safest way to protect yourself during an earthquake. Locate the best places to DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON (e.g. under a lab bench, at the end of the bench, or on the perimeter of the room). DO NOT stand in a doorway. Always crouch low and protect your head and neck.

After an Earthquake:

Move cautiously as objects will have shifted during the shaking, creating unexpected obstacles or hazards.

- As soon as possible, turn off gas or other valves; secure hazardous materials.
- If there are known hazardous materials in the room that may have been released during the earthquake, evacuate the area immediately, but move cautiously. Do NOT pull the fire alarm unless there is a fire.
- Move outdoors away from buildings, as **strong aftershocks may occur**. Take your personal belongings (wallet, purse, laptop, keys, etc.) and watch for building hazards inside or falling from the exterior of the building.
- Do not re-enter the building until a damage assessment has been completed by Facilities Management. This could be hours or days depending on the extent of the damage to campus.
- Once outside, make your way to the UVic Campus Assembly Area (playing fields) via safe routes for further information.
- Make sure you **CHECK IN** with a Building or Floor Emergency Coordinator, or your supervisor before leaving the area so you are accounted for. Report any information you have on injured people or hazmat concerns.