Unlike other emergencies, the procedures to deal with an earthquake are much less specific. Since the magnitude of an earthquake cannot be predetermined, everyone must initiate emergency precautions within a few seconds after the initial tremor is felt, assuming the worst possible case. The best earthquake instruction is to take precautions before the earthquake (e.g., secure or remove objects above you that could fall during an earthquake).

- **During an earthquake** remain calm and act – don’t react. If indoors, seek refuge under a desk or table or in a doorway, and hold on. Stay away from windows, shelves, and heavy equipment. If outdoors, move quickly away from buildings, utility poles, overhead wires, and other structures.

**Caution:** Avoid downed power or utility lines, because they may be energized. Do not attempt to enter buildings until you are advised to do so by the proper authorities. If you are in an automobile, stop in the safest place available, preferably an open area away from power lines and trees. Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle for the shelter it provides.

- **After the initial shock**, be prepared for aftershocks. Aftershocks are usually less intense than the main quake but can cause further structural damage. Protect yourself at all times. Evaluate the situation and call 911 for emergency assistance, if necessary. Do not use lanterns, torches, lighted cigarettes, or open flames, since gas leaks could be present. Open windows, etc., to ventilate the building. Watch out for broken glass. If the earthquake resulted in a fire, implement the fire procedures. (See FIRE). Determine whether or not anyone has been caught in the elevators or trapped by falling objects. If so, call 911. If the structural integrity of the building appears to be deteriorating rapidly, evacuate.

- Report damaged facilities to Public Safety. Gas leaks and power failures create special hazards.
- If an emergency exists, call 911.
- If evacuation alarm sounds, follow building evacuation procedures (See Building Evacuation).

If you become trapped in a building, do not panic. If a window is available, place an article of clothing (shirt, coat, etc.) outside the window as a marker for rescue crews. If there is no window, tap on the wall at regular intervals to alert emergency crews of your location. Emergency personnel will check all buildings immediately after a major quake. Priority is given to residence halls and buildings with elevators.