

Forensic Files

How earthquake ready are you?

There are thousands upon thousands of earthquakes annually, ranging on average from 18 major quakes to more than 2 million very minor ones per year (approximately 8,000 per day). On average, we can expect one exceptionally big one (with a magnitude of 8 or higher) each year somewhere on earth.



This apartment collapsed due to inadequate lateral bracing. It was too weak to withstand the earthquakes forces.



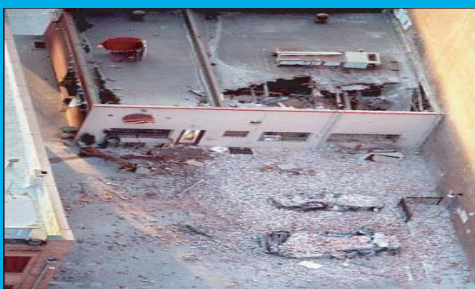
Thousands of buildings like this one are still in use. Many have been reinforced but are still weak and often are not appropriate for living.



Staircases are often poorly attached and can easily fall during earthquakes. This photo illustrates why it is almost always best to remain in your home and not rush outside during an earthquake.



This home completely fell apart when an earthquake caused this landslide. Other houses remained intact even as the landslide pulled out from beneath them.



This building's roof caved in. Falling debris crushed the vehicles that were parked near by.



This apartment building had a "soft first floor" causing the first floor to collapse during an intense earthquake.

Reducing Earthquake Vulnerability

Over the past 100 years we have seen remarkable societal strides to reduce earthquake vulnerability and loss through changes in planning, preparedness, building codes, education, and training. Engineers are determining how to construct buildings and infrastructures that will withstand strong shaking and ground shifts. Scientists are identifying the dangerous faults around the world, and determining the locations of possible future damaging earthquakes so we can be more prepared.