



FEMA



QuakeSmart: Raising Earthquake Mitigation Awareness in the Business Community



The QuakeSmart program encourages business leaders and owners in areas of the U. S. that are at risk from earthquakes to take actions that will mitigate damage to their businesses, provide greater safety for customers and employees, and speed recovery in the event of an earthquake.

The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program

Earthquakes cannot be prevented, but their impacts on life, property, and the economy can be managed. Congress first authorized the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) in 1977 (Public Law 95-124) to “reduce the risks of life and property from future earthquakes in the United States.” The most recent reauthorization was Public Law 108-360.

The role of NEHRP is to provide the public and private sectors with the scientific and engineering information, knowledge, and technologies needed to prepare for earthquakes and reduce the costs of losses and recovery. To fulfill this role, NEHRP works in partnership with the community of earthquake professionals in academia and in business, government, technical, professional, and codes-and-standards organizations involved in the earthquake risk reduction process.

Focusing on building code standards, technical guidance, and education, NEHRP is a collaborative effort among FEMA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the NEHRP lead agency, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

These agencies work in close coordination to improve the understanding of earthquake hazards and to reduce the Nation’s vulnerability to earthquakes.

Reaching Out to Business Communities

In 2008, FEMA introduced QuakeSmart, a unique program designed to help businesses mitigate earthquake losses and get back up and running as quickly as possible after a disaster. A cornerstone of the program is FEMA’s recognition that partnerships are key to raising awareness, and to making sure that businesses take action to become “QuakeSmart.”

In the first phase of the QuakeSmart program, FEMA orchestrated a series of community forums that were held in areas of the Nation most at risk from earthquakes. The forums were hosted by local Chambers of Commerce and featured presentations by leading national mitigation experts who addressed topics such as improving earthquake safety, protecting building contents, and Business Continuity Planning. From feedback received at these forums, FEMA developed a series of products to help businesses easily integrate earthquake mitigation into their disaster plans and business decisions.



FEMA



Getting the Word Out

As a public awareness initiative, the QuakeSmart program is committed to ensuring that program information is made available to a wide range of audiences. Public Service Announcements, press releases, web postings, and local news coverage of the community forums were only a few examples of how QuakeSmart began to promote its earthquake mitigation message.

In September 2011, FEMA released the first edition of the [QuakeSmart Toolkit \(FEMA P-811 DVD\)](#), a package of guidance and user-friendly, interactive tools to help businesses reduce the potential for injuries, damage, and financial losses from earthquakes. The Toolkit, which was updated in February 2014, provides business owners, managers, and employees with the information needed to prepare for an earthquake and to mitigate the risk to buildings and their contents. The Toolkit walks users through the three-step QuakeSmart process: Step 1: Identify Your Risk; Step 2: Make a Plan; and Step 3: Take Action!

Accompanying the guidance for each step in the QuakeSmart process are numerous tools that can be used by businesses as part of their mitigation process and campaign. These tools include:

- Checklists of potential structural and non-structural vulnerabilities
- An earthquake mitigation plan template
- Sample press releases and media alerts
- A multi-size, high-resolution banner
- A fact sheet on how to organize an awareness campaign
- Three videos, including a QuakeSmart mitigation training video for employees

The QuakeSmart Toolkit also provides background information on earthquakes and how they can affect businesses, emphasizing the importance of mitigation to community resilience. The Toolkit also includes comprehensive lists of FEMA earthquake mitigation publications and resources, training courses for the business community, and partner organization websites.

In 2013, FEMA, in partnership with the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. (FLASH), launched a nationwide campaign to put the QuakeSmart Toolkit into the hands of as many small businesses as possible. In planning the campaign, FEMA and FLASH determined that the most cost effective way to reach the largest number of small businesses would be through targeted outreach to umbrella-type associations such as State societies of association executives and associations serving grocers, restaurants, the lodging industry, chambers of commerce, child care providers, small private schools, and museums, among others. Before contacting the associations, the project team developed a folder of products to accompany the Toolkit and assist associations in reaching out to their members. Products included a sample newsletter article, sample email blast to association members, and sample web copy and link to the QuakeSmart Toolkit for members' only web pages.

To provide additional incentives for the small businesses associated with the targeted associations, FLASH also developed the QuakeSmart Designation program to provide business owners who complete the recommendations contained in the QuakeSmart Toolkit with branding materials to promote their business as being QuakeSmart. FLASH is incorporating the QuakeSmart Designation program into the expanded pilot program with State Fire Marshals to distribute the QuakeSmart Toolkit to small businesses during their annual fire inspection. FLASH is also promoting the QuakeSmart Toolkit to associations and small business in more than 18 States.

For more information on FEMA's NEHRP activities and additional resources, and to subscribe to FEMA NEHRP email updates, visit [FEMA Earthquake](#).