

## **EARTHQUAKE Personal Safety**

**“Drop, Cover and Hold”** is the most appropriate response to earthquake shaking in British Columbia.

In North America, only a small percentage of large structures are likely to collapse in moderate to strong--or even major earthquakes. There may well be a fair amount of non-structural damage such as windows popping, sprinkler system damage, HVAC system damage, even complete failure of non-structural walls--but most large structures are designed to remain standing.

Most injuries and deaths from earthquakes in North America are the result of moving, toppling, falling objects. The **“Drop, Cover and Hold”** drill, therefore, remains the best method of minimizing casualties for the most number of people effected by an earthquake.

In British Columbia, most of the building stock is made up of single family wood-frame homes. These buildings are not engineered (i.e. built to an earthquake code) but they are, however, small buildings, made of relatively flexible and light-weight materials and the **Drop, Cover and Hold** drill remains the most effective means of protecting oneself within these lighter-weight structures.

One of the most persuasive photographs in support of **“Drop, Cover and Hold”** is a photo taken of an elementary school following its collapse in the 1985 Mexico earthquake. In the photo, the second and third floors of the school have lost all structural support and are "pancaked" down on one another. The collapsed floors are only supported by the school desks which provided about half a metre to a metre of crawl space for safe egress.

**“Drop, Cover and Hold”**, is the best and most appropriate advice for minimizing casualties in the event of an earthquake in British Columbia.