Surviving an Earthquake

State Representative

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Dear Friends,

Washington was very fortunate in this most recent earthquake. Although damage occurred and some people were injured, it could have been a lot worse.

Preparation was the key to keeping our losses minimal. In the past decade, the Legislature has invested more than $65 million to retrofit bridges and upgrade our transportation infrastructure to survive a major earthquake. Strict and modern building codes have also helped to prevent failure of major structures.

Even so, we didn't get off unscathed. The Capitol sustained nearly $20 million in earthquake-related damages and remains closed for repairs. It's not yet known when the Capitol will re-open.

It's the third major earthquake the Capitol has survived. I was a student at Olympia High School when the 1965 quake struck. Several of my friends and I came directly to the Capitol following that quake, and we watched the chandelier inside the dome swing back and forth from the shaking. The domed portion of the Capitol was cracked and remained closed for years. In 1985, when the dome was reopened, I was one of the first people allowed to go up into it.

No one knows when the next earthquake will hit. The Olympia quake is a good reminder that we should also be prepared in our homes and workplaces. This newsletter provides some important information to help you get through the next earthquake, and some steps you can take now if your property has been damaged. Please read it carefully and take measures to be as prepared as possible.

If I can be of any help, or if you would like additional copies of this information, please contact my office in Olympia at (360) 786-7848, or call the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000.

Steve

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Van Luven personally inspects Capitol damage

Recently I was given a private tour of the Capitol Building, which has been closed since the day of the quake, Feb. 28.

When the quake struck, it shook photos off the wall. It knocked over bookcases. Walls cracked all over the Capitol. Marble cracked and broke. Debris was piled all over the floor.

Work is under way to repair damages, including the curved wall behind the House Rostrum, which sustained severe damage. In the State Reception Room, large marble columns were moved out of place and part of the ceiling fell.

Inside the Capitol, a large chain-link fence has been installed, closing off the north side of the building where the governor's office, the Senate and the state auditor's office are located. Crews are working to fix a large buttress against a column on the outside of the building that was loosened by the quake.

It could be months or even a couple of years before the Capitol is reopened, depending upon whether quake repairs are combined with a planned renovation of the building.

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

Stay Calm!

IF YOU ARE OUTDOORS, stay outdoors. If indoors, stay indoors. In earthquakes, many injuries occur as people attempt to enter or leave buildings. Move away from buildings, trees and utility wires. Once in the open, stay there until the tremors stop.

IF YOU ARE AT HOME or at work, take cover immediately. Crouch under a heavy desk, table or against inside walls, away from glass.

IF YOU ARE IN A VEHICLE, stop as quickly as safety permits, away from buildings and bridges. Stay in the vehicle until the shaking stops.

IF YOU ARE IN A HIGH RISE, use the stairs to exit.

IF YOU ARE IN A CROWDED AREA, move away from loaded shelves and overhead objects. Do not rush for an exit since hundreds of people may have the same idea.

BE PREPARED

Obtain Emergency Equipment

- Flashlight and batteries
- Adjustable wrench for turning off gas and water
- Fire extinguisher
- Battery operated radio
- Portable fire escape ladder
- Have cash on hand

Store Drinking Water

Have in storage one gallon of drinking/cooking water per person per day. A minimum supply of three days is recommended.

Learn First Aid

In addition to learning basic first aid techniques, have medical supplies on hand, including necessary prescriptions.

Plan Ahead

Discuss the possibility of being separated. Plan how and where to reunite. Prepare to handle your immediate needs for up to 72 hours without help.

Prepare Your Home

Bolt or strap water heaters and heavy appliances. Use flexible connections for gas appliances. Anchor overhead lights, hanging plants, heavy artwork and mirrors. Place heavy objects on lower shelves. Securely fasten shelves to walls. Brace or anchor top-heavy objects.

Rep. Steve Van Luven • 48th District

Rep. Steve Van Luven inspects damage to a wall in the House of Representatives caused by the Feb. 28 earthquake.

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

- CHECK FOR INJURIES and give first aid. Do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in a position where further injuries may occur.
- WEAR SHOES to protect yourself.
- CHECK FOR FIRES. Have a fire extinguisher on hand.
- CHECK YOUR NEIGHBORS. (I was very pleased and impressed that three different neighbors stopped to check on my mother in Olympia after the earthquake hit. She was fine, but it is comforting to know that her neighbors took the time to check in on her.)
- CHECK UTILITIES
  - If you smell gas, open windows and shut off the main gas valve outside. Report any broken gas lines. Do not re-enter the building until cleared by utility officials.
  - If electric wiring is broken, shut off electricity at the main switch. Assume all downed or damaged lines are live. If water pipes are broken, shut off the supply at the main valve outside. Use emergency water from melted ice cubes and hot water heaters.
- CLEAN UP SPILLS of medicines, drugs, broken glass, jagged wood, nails, and other harmful materials.
- CHECK CHIMNEYS for cracks and damage.
- DO NOT USE THE TELEPHONE EXCEPT IN EXTREME EMERGENCIES.

Washington is Earthquake Country

Washington has a history of large earthquakes. Earthquakes tend to recur where they have occurred in the past. As we know from the recent Olympia tremor, it's not a question of "if" Washington will have a large earthquake, but one of "when, where, and how big" they will be.

Historical Earthquakes 1936-2001

Largest known recent earthquakes with epicenters in Washington.

Year	Date	Mag.	Location
1936	July 15	5.75	Southeast WA
1939	Nov. 12	5.75	Puget Sound
1945	April 29	5.5	Central Cascades
1946	Feb. 14	6.3	Puget Sound
1949	April 13	7.1	Puget Sound
1959	Aug. 5	5.0	North Cascades
1965	April 29	6.5	Puget Sound
1981	Feb. 13	5.8	South Cascades
1990	April 14	5.2	Deming, WA
1995	Jan. 28	5.0	Robinson Point, WA
1996	May 2	5.3	Near Duvall, WA
1999	July 2	5.1	Near Satsop, WA
2001	Feb. 28	6.8	Near Olympia

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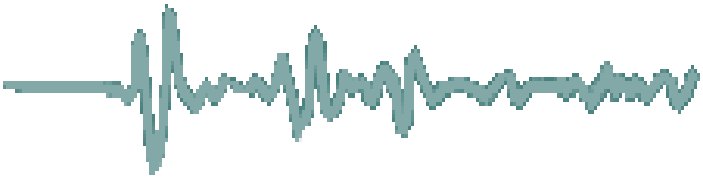
GETTING ASSISTANCE

President Bush has declared parts of Washington, including King County, a "major disaster area," which allows the release of federal funds to help meet immediate needs and assist in the rebuilding process. The Legislature also approved $1 million in state matching funds to help Washington families who suffered damages in the Feb. 28 earthquake.

Who do I call about federal aid?

If you sustained earthquake-related damage, first contact your insurance agent and make an assessment of the degree of damage. Whether or not you have earthquake insurance, you need to contact your city or county's Emergency Management Agency to report any damage incurred. (A list is available at http://www.wa.gov/wsem/2-ops/lists/emlist.htm)

If you're a resident or business owner who sustained losses in the designated counties, begin the disaster application process by calling **1-800-462-9029, or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired**.



What kinds of federal aid are available?

Individual Assistance

Low-Interest Loans: Most, but not all, federal assistance is in the form of low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration to cover residential and business losses not covered by state or local programs, or private insurance. People who do not qualify for loans may be able to apply for a cash grant.

Grants: These are to help pay for temporary housing, minor home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses, such as medical, dental, and funeral expenses that are incurred as a result of the disaster. Home inspections are normally conducted before a check is issued. FEMA funds 75 percent of the grant program's eligible costs with the remaining 25 percent covered by the state. The state administers the program, known as the Individual And Family Grant (IFG) program.

Public Assistance

Public assistance provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance to help state and local governments and certain private non-profit organizations rebuild. Federal funds to the state and affected local governments in the designated counties will pay 75 percent of the costs for debris removal, emergency services related to the earthquake, and repairing or replacing damaged public facilities, such as roads, buildings and utilities.

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