

*"Washington state takes very seriously the risks that earthquakes and tsunamis pose to our people and communities. Being prepared makes all the difference between lives lost and lives saved. It's essential that all levels of government continue to improve our preparedness and response capacity for these events."*

Governor Jay Inslee

February 2016

## WASHINGTON STATE EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

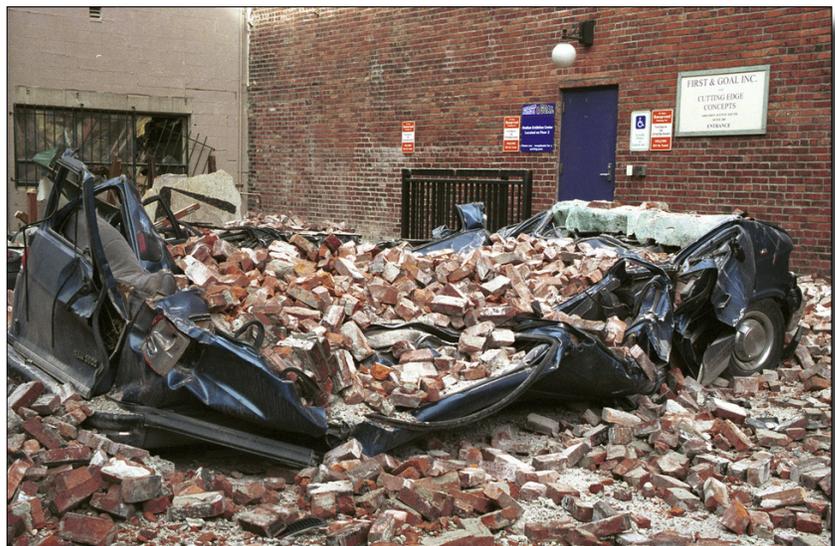
*Washington state is taking steps to protect lives and help communities in the aftermath of a large-scale earthquake or tsunami.*

Washington has experienced approximately 15 significant destructive earthquakes in the past 150 years, and its proximity to the Cascadia Subduction Zone — a major fault line off the Pacific Coast of North America — puts the region at significant risk for major earthquakes and tsunamis.

Washington state is taking the following actions:

- » **Seismic-updated building codes:** The Washington State Building Code Council [recently adopted](#) new seismic improvements for state building standards, based on the 2015 International Building Code. Seismic-updated codes can protect health and safety by making buildings more resilient during earthquakes. The newly adopted Washington code includes design updates for seismic reinforcement of masonry fireplaces, structural steel elements, storage racks and vertical glass, as well as special inspections to verify that seismic-resistant elements are properly installed.

In adopting these changes, which will take effect July 1, 2016, **Washington became the first state in the nation to use updated seismic design standards** as a mandatory minimum code for new building construction.



- » **New state investments in earthquake safety:** In 2015, Governor Inslee and the Washington State Legislature invested [\\$4.6 million in the use of LiDAR technology to map, identify and better anticipate geologic hazards from landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis.](#) The Governor and Legislature also worked together to [enact new legislation](#) that expands state fire mobilizations to include all hazards, including earthquakes. This policy change was a priority recommendation of the state Route 530 Landslide Commission that Governor Inslee convened to examine public safety improvements in the aftermath of the tragic March 2014 landslide in Snohomish County.
- » **Resilient WA Initiative:** Washington state agencies continue their work to implement the findings of a report from the Washington State Emergency Management Council's Seismic Safety Committee, which provided a framework for long-term implementation of seismic risk-reduction policies and activities across the state. This comprehensive assessment revealed the state's vulnerabilities and identified areas where the state — working with federal, local and tribal partners and others — could focus sustained efforts to provide the greatest improvement in life safety and post-earthquake recovery.



- » **Planning for a major Cascadia subduction zone event:** The Washington State Military Department is leading the state's preparation for a major seismic event, working alongside the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the federal Department of Defense and local emergency management teams. In June 2016, this will culminate in the national-scale interagency exercise "[Cascadia Rising](#)." The Washington State Emergency Management Division has created the [Great Washington Shakeout](#), an annual statewide safety drill in which Washingtonians are taught what to do during a major earthquake. More than 1 million people participated in Washington's Shakeout drills in 2014 and 2015.
- » **First-in-the-nation tsunami protection project:** Washington state is implementing [Project Safe Haven](#) — a planning effort to integrate artificial high ground in coastal communities that are threatened by tsunamis and have limited alternatives for escape. The first tsunami safe haven in the United States will open in June 2016 at Ocosta Elementary School in Westport.