

Press Release
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
29 April 2019

BWC RELEASED EVACUATION PROCEDURE DURING EARTHQUAKE

Disasters, emergencies, and calamities take many varied forms and may occur gradually or instantaneous, in small, medium, large or initially imperceptible magnitude. Disaster management must be a well-planned, well-organized and well-coordinated activity.

The Philippines is located along the so-called Ring of Fire, a vast Pacific Ocean region where many of Earth's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. A deadly earthquake in the central Philippines last Monday, 22 April 2019, highlighted the country's vulnerability to natural disasters. The workplace earthquake drill which teaches workers what to do before, during, and after an earthquake, and how to survive on their own was put into test when a magnitude 6.1 earthquake hit Luzon.

As a precautionary measure, the DOLE – Bureau of Working Conditions issued the following evacuation procedure for the guidance of employers and workers during earthquake.

1. On detection of an earthquake, remain in place. Remain calm, try to calm and reassure others.
2. If indoors, watch for falling plaster, light fixtures and other objects. Stay away from windows and mirrors. If in danger, get under a table, desk, or gurney, in a corner away from windows, or strong doorway. Usually it is best not to run outdoors. (Whenever possible you should duck, cover and hold)
3. After the initial shock has ended and a reasonable interval has passed with no future shock, the safety officers must survey their immediate surroundings to determine injuries and damage.
4. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
5. Safety Officers are responsible for employees and clients in their vicinity. If possible, they must reassure and calm those who are hysterical and panic stricken.
6. If there are obvious injuries from falling objects, shattered glasses or personnel trapped under debris, assistance must be requested. First-aid must be performed within one's capability.
7. Check for fire or fire hazards from broken electrical lines or short circuits. Follow the fire response procedures if ever it will occur.

8. If the office has not been made unsafe by the earthquake, it is advisable to encourage employees to stay inside until the conditions of the roadways are determined.
9. If evacuation is deemed advisable, determine the condition of exit areas and avoid those that are obstructed or otherwise
10. Be prepared for additional aftershocks. Although most of these are smaller than the main shock, some may be large enough to cause additional damage.
11. Check to see that the sewage lines are intact before permitting flushing of toilets.
12. And lastly, employers must see to it to prioritize the safety of their workers.

-MASV-