

**Policy Number/Title:** 6.2.5 Earthquakes  
**Effective Since:** 01/01/2016  
**Last Revision Approved:** 07/23/2025  
**Responsible Office:** Winthrop University Police Department

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### **1. Scope:**

Winthrop University community, faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

### **2. Definitions:**

This section was intentionally left blank.

### **3. Policy:**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures to be followed by the student body, faculty, and staff in the event of an earthquake. Implementation of these procedures whenever necessary should minimize loss of life, injury, and disruption of scheduled activities.

Priorities:

Unlike other natural disasters, earthquakes occur without warning and could strike anytime. The unpredictable nature of an earthquake and aftershocks will cause great physical and social impacts over a broad geographic region. Faculty and staff will be required to assist in assuring student safety.

Expectations for Employees:

Since earthquakes occur without warning and are very unpredictable, notification will not exist. The best course of action is to recognize that an earthquake is occurring and take safety precautions to protect life.



#### **4. Procedures:**

##### Communications:

Winthrop University may communicate with the campus community by any of the following means:

1. ALERTUS Notification System — Beacons within campus buildings, also includes instant messaging system for the campus' networked computers
2. WU Alert — Blackboard Connect text/SMS and voice messages for all subscribers
3. E-mail — Messages to faculty/staff/student distribution lists
4. Web — Updates on [www.winthrop.edu](http://www.winthrop.edu) and detailed information on [www.winthrop.edu/emergency](http://www.winthrop.edu/emergency)
5. Campus Alert Line — Recorded message on 803/323-2222 with detailed information, primarily for individuals without access to a mobile device, computer, etc.
6. Face to Face — Direct contact by emergency responders
7. Runner — Group contact by individuals moving from area to area
8. Media — Communication via local radio and television stations

The "all clear" signal may not come following the initial earthquake. Aftershocks can occur for sometime, but will diminish over a period of time.

##### Responsibility and Control:

Emergency responders will have total control of the scene. If the situation dictates, the Incident Command System will be used as directed by the National Incident Management System.

The university also will assemble the Emergency Management Team to make university-related decisions.

The Winthrop University Police Department will operate an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in the Department. If the incident requires York County to open the Emergency Operations Center, the Winthrop University Police Department or a designee will be represented in the York County EOC and/or will be in continuous communications with the Winthrop EOC.

##### Emergency and Training Plans:

##### Notification:



There will be no opportunity for notification. So it is important to understand the definition of an earthquake and how to recognize it.

An earthquake is a sudden rapid shaking or trembling of the earth's surface and could be highly destructive. It will occur without warning, and a strong earthquake will cause severe damage and a large number of casualties over a wide area. Aftershocks may occur for some period of time, but will diminish gradually over time.

In the aftermath of an earthquake, the South Carolina Earthquake Plan will be activated and the response and recovery will be followed according to the state plan.

The university may activate any of its own specific plans for evacuation, chemical cleanup, etc., but the general state plan will be followed.

#### Specific Actions:

If an earthquake is identified, the following specific actions will be taken to insure the safety of Winthrop University student body and staff:

#### Preparation:

Know the safest places in your office, work area, or living unit. These areas should be away from heavy furniture, appliances, fireplaces, and large panes of glass (windows, mirrors, etc.).

#### During an Earthquake:

If you are indoors, drop to the floor. Take cover under a sturdy desk, table, or other furniture. Hold on to it and be prepared to move with it. Hold the position until the ground stops shaking, and it is safe to move. Stay clear of windows, fireplaces, wood stoves, and heavy furniture or appliances. Stay inside. If you are in a crowded area, take cover and stay where you are; encourage other to do likewise.

If you are outside, get into the open, away from buildings and power lines. Be watchful for falling glass and building debris.

If you are driving, stop if it is safe, but stay inside your car. Stay away from bridges, overpasses, and tunnels. Move your car as far out of the normal traffic pattern as possible. If possible, avoid stopping under trees, light posts, power lines, or signs.

#### After an Earthquake:

- Check for injuries. Do not move a seriously injured person unless he or she is in immediate danger of further injuries. If you need emergency assistance, call the Winthrop University Police Department at 323-3333.
- Be aware of any structural damage around you, and if necessary and safe to do, carefully leave the building per the "General Building Evacuation" guidelines.



- Always check for hazards:
  - Fire or potential fire hazards
  - Damaged electrical wiring
  - Downed or damaged utility lines
  - Stay away from downed lines, even if power appears to be off
  - Fallen objects in closets and cabinets. Displaced objects may fall when you open the door
  - Make sure each phone is on its receiver. Telephones off the hook can tie up the telephone network.
- Clean up potentially harmful materials and/or medicines that may have spilled per the hazardous chemical protocols.
- Expect aftershocks. Most of these are smaller than the main earthquake. Some may be large enough to do additional damage to weakened structures.
- If you are instructed to evacuate the campus, follow the "Campus Evacuation" plan.

## **5. Resources:**

Emergency Response Plans Level 3: Earthquake:

<https://www.winthrop.edu/emergency/earthquake.aspx>

## **6. History of Revisions:**

07/23/2025	Minor Revisions
01/01/2016	Policy first established

## **7. Approvals:**

President Signature/Date: