

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

Most buildings that have suffered structural damage will show very distinctive outward signs. Before entering any building, thoroughly check for signs of possible structural damage.

Buildings are built with straight horizontal and vertical lines. When it has suffered structural damage these straight lines can become distorted. This is a strong indication that the buildings structural stability has been compromised. The following is a list of some of the tell-tail signs of structural damage.

HORIZONTAL LINES:

- Uneven window lines
- Draw an imaginary line across the tops of windows
 - Is that line level?
- Foundation not level
 - Ground around foundation is fractured and uneven

VERTICAL LINES:

- Any leaning
 - Look at all sides of the building
 - Compare to the building next door .
- Garage doors and entry way
 - Are these doors out of plumb
 - **NOTE use a pen or pencil to sight along to check for horizontal and vertical lines**

LARGE CRACKS IN THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING:

- Especially around garage doors and entry way
- Foundation cracks

SEPARATION BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS:

- Is it even?
- Was it there before?
- Are other buildings on the block similar

LIQUEFACTION:

- Around the foundation area
- Coming out of openings on ground floor

Wood frame buildings, such as homes and apartment buildings, perform very well during an earthquake. They are built to withstand the lateral force of the quake if properly prepared with foundation bolts and cripple walls. Garage doors of these buildings are large openings and can be a weak point in a quake since there is no lateral support. The area around the garage door and foundation, should be examined carefully in your structural damage assessment.