

STRENGTHEN YOUR HOME AND SAVE MONEY

Starting February 1, 2007, property owners in Berkeley will have new guidelines to help ensure that work strengthening homes to withstand earthquakes is effective and qualifies for the transfer tax rebate.

Owners of wood-frame residential structures and mixed-use buildings with two or more residential units who complete voluntary retrofit work within one year of sale date can claim a dollar-for-dollar rebate of their property transfer tax up to one-half percent of the structure's sale price.

Berkeley is one of the first cities in California to adopt code standards for voluntary seismic improvements to wood frame structures with five units or fewer, and the only city to return tax funds to owners who complete the safety work.



WHY PREPARE?

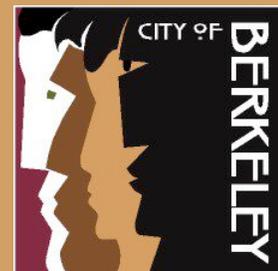
On the Hayward Fault, Berkeley is at risk for a major earthquake.

About 60% of Berkeley's single-family homes have had some earthquake safety work done.

Model technical drawings – or “plan set” – are now available to simplify design for many homes.

TAX REBATE FOR SEISMIC IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR HOME

Earthquake strengthening can save more than just your home!



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WHAT IMPROVEMENTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

These kinds of improvements may qualify for a tax rebate:

-  Bolting of foundations to mudsills and installing shear walls;
-  Work to repair or replace substandard foundations;
-  Securing of chimneys and stacks;
-  Removal of unreinforced masonry chimneys;
-  Anchoring of existing water heaters;
-  Other earthquake strengthening work that meets accepted standards.

Call or visit the Berkeley Building and Safety Division in advance to make sure your improvements are eligible.

The strengthening guidelines and model plan set are available at www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/buildingandsafety.

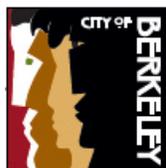


HOW TO QUALIFY

To qualify for the tax reduction, an owner (or their building contractor) must, within one year of the sale date:

1. Obtain a building permit.
2. Complete the earthquake safety work.
3. Get an approved final inspection.
4. File a completed Verification and Refund Application with the Building and Safety Division.

The Finance Department then processes the rebate.



Get Involved. Get Ready.
No One's Prepared Until Everyone's Prepared