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For immediate release

B.C. Earthquakes a Reminder of the Need to Prepare Now for Natural Disasters

TORONTO, ONTARIO – A series of significant recent earthquakes in British Columbia is a reminder that it is inevitable that a major earthquake will someday cause significant damage in the province.

“Disaster losses can be greatly reduced if people undertake appropriate preventative measures,” notes Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR). “Now is the best time to be prepared for the next event.”

Simple preventative measures can include:

- Anchoring items that could fall in your home -- most injuries during an earthquake occur as a result of falling objects (bookcases, cabinets, large appliances, etc.);
- Bracing unreinforced chimneys, masonry and concrete walls and foundations;
- Applying safety film to windows and glass doors; and
- Fitting all gas appliances with flexible connections and/or a breakaway gas shut-off device, or installing a seismic main gas shut-off device.

“Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that many disaster losses are entirely preventable if people plan ahead,” notes Kovacs. “Simple, low-cost actions today can greatly strengthen communities' resilience to natural hazards like earthquakes. Nature's extreme events can be relentless and unforgiving, but need not result in disasters.”

There are about 1,500 earthquakes recorded in Canada each year. A few dozen are strong enough to cause damage. The strongest earthquakes occur near the Pacific rim. Significant earthquakes have also occurred in the St. Lawrence and Ottawa River valleys and in the Arctic. There are several Canadian communities vulnerable to earthquakes including Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa, Victoria and Quebec City .

To learn more about earthquakes and other natural hazards and ways that you can protect yourself, your family and your property, please visit the ICLR website -- www.ICLR.org

Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

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