

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM

EARTHQUAKE

RETROFIT YOUR HOME WITH PRE-DESIGNED PLANSETS... THE EASIEST WAY TO GET THE PERMITS YOU NEED!

Since 1998, homeowners have been able to take advantage of pre-designed solutions for bracing (aka retrofitting) their homes against earthquake damage by using prescriptive plansets.

These plans help homeowners with qualifying structures obtain the necessary building permit(s) more quickly and easily and eliminate the need to hire a design professional to develop drawings.

DAMAGE

Seattle has adopted a prescriptive planset for residential seismic retrofitting that is currently used all over the West Coast. The planset was developed in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Seattle Office of Emergency Management.

The prescriptive planset offers a way for homeowners to retrofit their home based on the way your house is built and the number of floors above the foundation for your house. The planset includes tables describing how much of the exterior wall below the first floor must be braced and how often it must be anchored to the foundation and first floor. Additional tables show how to reduce bracing requirements, with details to address different framing connections. Pre-drawn construction details in the plan-set are ready to use.

HOW TO USE THE PRESCRIPTIVE PLANSET

After completing the home assessment checklist, and determining that your house qualifies for this program, you must complete the planset. You'll have to provide a scaled outline of your house foundation or floor plan. Once you have completed this outline, you must select which retrofit details in the plan set will apply to your project. The solutions vary depending on the specific construction of your home. For details on completing the plansets see Examples provided at the end of the prescriptive plan set.

DETERMINING IF YOUR HOUSE QUALIFIES

The prescriptive plansets are designed for homes that meet certain structural criteria set out in the home assessment checklists and guide found in Sheet S0 of Prescriptive Plan Set. The checklist included in the plansets must be completed and submitted to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI). The guide explains the various components of the checklist. In general, the homes must be of light wood-frame construction and light roof construction, not irregularly shaped, with a concrete or reinforced masonry foundation in good condition up to three stories in height (depending on the height of the support wall below your first floor), and on a relatively level lot.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR HOME DOESN'T QUALIFY

Homes that do not meet the structural criteria of this program are still candidates for seismic retrofitting. However, an architect or structural engineer will need to develop specific plans for your home and SDCI may need more time to review those more unique proposals.

Engineered details for limited earthquake home retrofits may also qualify for a subject-to-field-inspection. More information can be found in Tip 316, Subject to Field Inspection Permits.

GETTING THE PRESCRIPTIVE PLANSET, CHECKLIST, AND GUIDE

Seattle's prescriptive plansets are available at [www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/permits-we-issue-\(a-z\)/earthquake-home-retrofit-permit](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/permits-we-issue-(a-z)/earthquake-home-retrofit-permit).

Most earthquake damage to single-family homes is caused either by the home jumping from its foundation or the collapse of a weak pony wall.

SDCI's home retrofit plansets address these issues by following the ABCs:

ANCHORING the home to the foundation

CONNECTING this wall to the supporting floor

BRACING the wall below the first floor

OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR RETROFITTING YOUR HOME

CLASSES FOR ASSESSING AND RETROFITTING
Home Owner Resources
www.seattle.gov/emergency-management/about-us/event-calendar/
206-233-5076

Contractor Resources
Education & Events (wabo.org)
Prepare your home - Emergency Management | seattle.gov
206-233-5076

TOOL LENDING LIBRARIES
Phinney Neighborhood Association
www.phinneycenter.org/tools/
(206) 783-2244

Southeast Seattle Tool Library
<https://setools.myturn.com/library/>
info@setools.org
(202) 780-7296

CONTRACTOR REFERRAL
www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Emergency/Preparedness
206-233-5076

HOME RETROFIT LOANS
City of Seattle
Office of Housing
Home Repair Loans
(206) 684-0244
HomeRepair@seattle.gov
www.seattle.gov/housing/homeowners/home-repair#eligiblerepairs

Also contact your local bank or credit union.

HOW TO GET A PERMIT FROM SDCI

Plansets may be submitted to SDCI through the Seattle Services Portal: <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov>.

Construction projects can be submitted for screening and accepted for expedited review without an appointment.

Projects that qualify for voluntary earthquake home retrofits using the prescriptive PROJECT IMPACT planset also pay a reduced fee, to encourage homeowners to retrofit their homes.

For more information or to get answers to your questions, visit <https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/resources/send-us-a-question> and use our Q&A tool.

SDCI: WORKING WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

As of 2023, over a thousand homes in the Seattle area have been strengthened to resist earthquake damage through Seattle's home retrofitting program. The program is regional, with partners throughout the central Puget Sound area, including Kirkland, Bellevue, and Tacoma.

Seattle's process is entirely on-line through the Seattle Services Portal at <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov>.