

QUAKEPROOFING YOUR HOUSE

*Should You Call a Contractor
Or An Engineer?*

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WHAT TO EXPECT IN AN ENGINEER'S DESIGN

To begin with, the engineer should be a licensed civil or structural engineer with broad experience in wood design.

The design should include evaluations of the existing strength of all parts of the house. This is to ensure that no unnecessary strengthening is added, and that the added strengthening will not overstress weak areas. The evaluations may reveal that the house is already strong enough, therefore, no strengthening is required.

The house should be analyzed in terms of how it will perform as a unit while reacting to an earthquake. The strengthening elements should then be located where they are least expensive to build while still properly strengthening the unit. This greatly reduces the cost of tearing out and replacing existing walls or working in areas where access is difficult.

If you have a limited budget, the engineer can prioritize the strengthening goals. This will allow you to strengthen the weakest areas first so that you get the maximum increase in strength for the dollars you can invest.

The design should include drawings that allow you to get competitive construction bids. This means that all the contractors will be bidding on the same work, and they must follow the drawings and specifications.