

## New York City Risks \$4.7B in Earthquake Damage

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A recent federal analysis has revealed that New York City could face up to \$4.7 billion in building damage if struck by a magnitude-5.0 earthquake, similar to those that have recently shaken parts of the Northeast.

The study, published by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), used computer models to estimate potential impacts from a moderate earthquake. The hypothetical quake

was based on a fault system near Yonkers in Westchester County, just north of the city. While such a seismic event is not considered highly likely, experts warn it is not impossible either.

The model shows that a 5.0-magnitude earthquake could result in hundreds of building collapses, with damage concentrated in older areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. The report also estimates costs related to temporary shelter, displacement, and loss of services, bringing total economic losses close to \$4.7 billion.

Although earthquakes in New York are rare, the region is not immune. In January 2024, a 3.8-magnitude tremor struck near Buffalo, and in April 2025, a 4.8-magnitude earthquake centered in New Jersey shook much of the East Coast, including New York City. No serious injuries or structural damage were reported, but the events renewed interest in urban earthquake preparedness.

USGS researchers said the new damage projection is not meant to cause panic, but to assist policymakers, emergency services, and building engineers in understanding seismic vulnerabilities in older urban centers. Unlike California, where earthquake-resilient construction is common, many New York City buildings were not designed with seismic activity in mind.

Seismologists note that earthquakes in the eastern United States tend to be felt over a larger area than those of the same magnitude in the West, due to differences in rock composition. This means a 5.0 earthquake in the New York region could be felt across multiple states.

The New York City Emergency Management Department has urged residents to remain aware of basic safety measures, such as securing heavy furniture, identifying safe spots in homes, and understanding emergency communication procedures.

While the probability of a strong earthquake striking New York remains relatively low, experts emphasise that preparedness is essential in reducing casualties and damage should one occur.

This latest projection is part of a broader effort by the federal government to update seismic risk maps and guide future infrastructure planning in at-risk areas across the U.S.