



Institute for Catastrophic  
Loss Reduction

Building resilient communities

Institut de prévention  
des sinistres catastrophiques

Bâtir des communautés résilientes

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### **Fire Following an Earthquake in Montreal Options for reducing the expected loss**

Toronto, Ontario: A study by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) finds that \$10 to \$30 billion of fire damage could result following a severe earthquake in the Montreal area. The expected losses could be reduced significantly through investments in an auxiliary supply of water for firefighters, seismic retrofits to fire halls and other loss prevention actions.

*Fire following earthquake in the Montreal region* was prepared by Charles Scawthorn. Dr. Scawthorn also authored the 2001 ICLR study *Assessment of Risk due to Fire Following Earthquake Lower Mainland British Columbia* and studies assessing San Francisco, Los Angeles and Tokyo. He is the leading authority on managing the risk of fire following an earthquake.

Strong shaking in the Montreal area would lead to hundreds of ignitions. Breaks in water supply and damage to fire stations would compromise the capacity of firefighters to suppress the fires. Extensive damage from strong shaking would be accompanied by significant destruction due to fire.

Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction said: “This research found that Montreal area fire agencies are very advanced, well-equipped and modern in their organization, methods and tactics. But even so, a large number of simultaneous fires caused by an earthquake could overwhelm fire services unless municipalities take action before a major earthquake strikes. The good news is that there are several measures fire departments located in the study area can take and these are outlined in the study.”

*Fire following earthquake in the Montreal region* was sponsored by SCOR Reinsurance Group, Desjardins Insurance, Aviva Canada and iA Financial Group.

It is inevitable that a major earthquake will eventually strike in Quebec. ICLR and its 120 member insurers are pleased to support research that provides a better understanding of this risk and the specific practices that would improve our resilience. Many losses are preventable if we invest in resilience.

The full report can be downloaded at [www.iclr.org](http://www.iclr.org)

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**About the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction**

Established in 1997 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at Western University in London, Canada. The International Council for Science designated the Institute as an International Centre of Excellence in integrated research on disaster risk. The Institute is also a founding member of the Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes. The Institute's research staff are 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 the Institute's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

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