

US Geological Survey, Earthquake Hazards Program, ShakeMap Scientific Background at <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/shakemap/background.php>

Spectral Response Maps

Following earthquakes larger than magnitude 5.5, spectral response maps are made. Response spectra portray the response of a damped, single-degree-of-freedom oscillator to the recorded ground motions. This data representation is useful for engineers determining how a structure will react to ground motions. The response is calculated for a range of periods. Within that range, the International Building Code (IBC) refers to particular reference periods that help define the shape of the "design spectra" that reflects the building code.