



Strengthen soft and weak story construction

Why

- ▶ Reinforcing soft and weak story construction prevents story weakness, failure, or collapse due to inadequate strength and inability to support the load above.

How

- ▶ A soft and weak story generally refers to a condition in which a lower story has less strength or stiffness than the story above.
- ▶ Homes and buildings with first floor open areas or buildings with parking underneath, like garage apartments, are considered “soft story” construction. These structures are especially vulnerable to collapse in earthquakes because the stiffness and strength of one story are substantially weaker than those of the stories above.

How to Identify

- ▶ Look for added steel frames, braces, shear walls, and foundation bolting to determine if soft-story construction has been retrofitted for earthquakes.
- ▶ Check for retrofit records, inspection reports, and building permits. An experienced, licensed retrofit contractor or engineer can assess existing and potential seismic improvements.