



Are Swarming Locusts Next...???

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Fire. Earthquakes. Winds. Should we be expecting to see swarming locusts soon? Recent events have led to me getting a lot of calls and inquiries about the structural integrity of some of the buildings that we have worked on over the past number of years. In recent weeks, we have had a fire in a parking garage, an earthquake that measured 5.8 on the Richter scale and now Hurricane Irene which came complete with 70+ mph winds and 7 inches of rain. While these are not Biblical scale events, they require our attention.



After the earthquake of August 23rd, a number of people asked about the structural integrity of the [Riverwalk Building](#), a four-story, steel framed building on the Christina River in Wilmington. In addition to that, I was asked to check the effect of a car fire in the [Ships Tavern Parking Garage](#) to determine if any damage had occurred to the steel framing of the building. But I was surprised when, at least up until now, no one has asked about the effect of the winds from the hurricane on some of our buildings. That might be because they feel like we made it through an earthquake so, why should they worry about a "second rate," Category 1 hurricane.

The truth is we shouldn't take these events so lightly. Even a cursory review of the building to seek out possible structural issues is warranted. If you walk around the exterior of your facility, take a look at the foundation. Is there any separation of wall system from the foundation? Look at the wall systems. Are there any cracks in the façade? Are the windows racked? Are all vertical planes plumb and true? On the inside of the building take note of the wall and ceiling surfaces. Are there any cracks that had not appeared previously? Has the ceiling tile shifted? Do the doors close? Does anything look out of place?

The best and surest way to determine if the building is in good condition is to engage the services of a structural engineering consultant. They can inspect the building framing, bracing and connections to give you the comfort that all is well. Most steel framed structures perform well in wind and seismic events. Steel is a ductile material and framing members are "elastic" under loads imposed by such events. Concrete or masonry buildings may require a little extra attention as they are not as ductile and could become a problem when they encounter the forces of Mother Nature.



So, if locusts do arrive, either call your state's Department of Natural Resources or Orkin.
Don't call me...I'll be the one kneeling in the first pew at the Chapel of Divine Mercy.

[Contact us today!](#)