

IL residents encouraged to register for "The Great ShakeOut" earthquake drill

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'Drop, Cover and Hold On' Drill Set for October 20

SPRINGFIELD – Earthquakes occur without warning and can have devastating effects, as the world witnessed this week after a deadly earthquake in Italy. With two seismic zones in the southern part of the state and Illinois residents who travel throughout the world, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies encourage people to participate in the annual Great ShakeOut earthquake drill on Oct. 20 to learn how to stay safe when the earth starts to shake.

“We never know when or where the next catastrophic earthquake will occur,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “But we do know steps people can take to stay safe. The Great ShakeOut earthquake drill is a quick, easy way for people to practice steps that could save their lives. We encourage Illinois residents to join millions of people across the U.S. and around the globe in the Great ShakeOut on Oct. 20.”

Joseph said the ShakeOut drill, which will occur at 10:20 a.m. on Oct. 20, centers around the Drop, Cover and Hold On actions: drop down to the ground, take cover under a table or other piece of heavy furniture and then hold on until the shaking stops.

Illinois has participated in ShakeOut drills for the past six years. In October 2015, nearly 667,000 Illinoisans took part in the nationwide earthquake drill. To date, nearly 328,000 people in Illinois are registered for this year’s event.

Joseph noted that some of the most powerful earthquakes to ever occur in the U.S. happened a little more than 200 years ago in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which reaches into southern Illinois. That series of earthquakes lasted for several months and shaking was felt as far away as the East Coast.

Schools, businesses, government agencies, families and others can register to participate in the drill at www.shakeout.org/centralus. Registered participants will receive additional information about the drill and earthquake preparedness. While the international drill will take place on Oct. 20, individual drills can be conducted anytime within two weeks of that date.

Additional information about the earthquake risk in Illinois and steps to take before, during and after an earthquake is available at www.Ready.Illinois.gov.