



ShakeOut Drill Manual

For Government Agencies and Facilities

Are You Ready to ShakeOut?

Major earthquakes can cause unprecedented catastrophes. With earthquakes as an inevitable part of our future, people should make plans and take actions to ensure that disasters do not become catastrophes. What we do *now*, will determine what our lives will be like *afterwards*. With this in mind, the Earthquake Country Alliance (www.earthquakecountry.org) created the *Great California ShakeOut*, an earthquake drill and preparedness activity in which everyone can participate, which has now spread to many other states and regions. To register as a participant for a ShakeOut drill in your area visit www.shakeout.org. Government entities of all sizes can also use the drill to get their citizens, employees, and other stakeholders involved and prepared for a big earthquake.

Government-level emergency management offices have frequent exercises that go beyond these guidelines, however, to ensure the continuity of vital civic functions, all public employees must be prepared and coordinated to survive a major earthquake. So it can be a good idea for non-emergency government entities to hold (simpler) drills to practice their response. Furthermore, the level of your staff's own personal and family preparedness will be key to their availability to support your agency's response and recovery efforts after a disaster.

Although they were created for ShakeOut [drill](#) events across the nation, the instructions on the following pages can be used or adapted for earthquake drills *anywhere* and *anytime*. They have been designed for non-emergency government agencies and personnel. To be flexible, three levels of drills (simple, basic, intermediate) are provided below, each with steps to be taken before, during, and after the drill. Each drill uses the general earthquake response of *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* (www.dropcoverholdon.org) as its foundation.

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Level 1 – Simple: *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* Drill..... 2

This drill uses simple steps to inform all employees how to perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* – a quake-safe action designed to protect people from falling furniture and flying objects during ground shaking.

Level 2 – Basic: *Life Safety* Drill..... 3

This life safety drill is designed to engage employees to think through their emergency response actions during an earthquake, then afterwards to review and discuss what worked or what did not, in order to make improvements for the next drill or actual earthquake.

Level 3 – Intermediate: *Life Safety and Continuity Planning* Drill 5

This life safety drill is designed to engage employees to think through their emergency response actions during and after an earthquake, then afterwards to review and discuss what worked or what did not, in order to make improvements for the next drill or actual earthquake.





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Level 1 – Simple: Drop, Cover, and Hold On Drill

This drill uses simple steps to inform all employees how to perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* – a quake-safe action designed to protect lives from falling furniture and flying objects than can become projectiles during ground shaking.

BEFORE the Drill

1. If you will participate in a ShakeOut drill, register your Government Agency or Facility as an official participant at www.ShakeOut.org (make sure to register in your state or region).
2. Inform your employees regarding:
 - The date and time of your drill.
 - How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are.
 - Your expectations for their participation (i.e. *Drop/Cover/Hold On*, gather at a central location for a head count, post-drill discussions).
 - If you will participate in a ShakeOut drill, encourage employees, staff, contractors, etc. to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register as individuals or organization at www.ShakeOut.org, in their area, so they can participate and receive information directly on how to be safe during an earthquake.
3. (Optional) Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play during your drill by downloading recordings from www.ShakeOut.org/resources.

DURING the Drill

1. Via the public announcement (PA) system, email, cell phone/text message, or verbal direction:
 - Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
 - (Optional) Play the audio recording (see above) on your PA or, alternatively, play it on a computer in each office.
 - Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what would be falling on them in a real earthquake. Items should be secured or moved after the drill.
2. After at least one minute, announce that the shaking is over and that employees can stand up again. Thank them for participating.
3. Encourage employees and staff to discuss their experiences with one another.

AFTER the Drill

1. Ask for feedback on how the drill went.
2. Schedule the next drill for one year later (or sooner if employees need to practice).
3. If you participated in a ShakeOut drill, complete a post-ShakeOut survey if one is available on your ShakeOut region's website.
4. Share photos and stories at www.ShakeOut.org
5. Encourage employees to prepare at home using the 7 Steps to Earthquake Safety from "*Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country*" (see www.earthquakecountry.org/sevensteps).



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Level 2 – Basic: Life Safety Drill

This drill focuses on immediate life safety and engages employees to think through their emergency response actions during an earthquake. *It can be used whether or not your government agency has developed a disaster plan (or Continuity of Operations Plan).*

BEFORE the Drill

1. If you will participate in a ShakeOut drill, register your Government Agency or Facility as an official participant at www.ShakeOut.org (make sure to register in your state or region).
 - Determine whether registration will be at the jurisdiction/agency level, or whether you will instruct your departments or facilities to register individually.
2. If your facility serves the general public, determine how or whether you will involve them in the drill.
3. Inform your employees regarding:
 - The date and time of your drill.
 - How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are.
 - This includes taking cover beneath a sturdy table or desk, or dropping to the floor near an interior wall and covering your head with your hands and arms.
 - Develop special procedures for unique locations such as warehouses and offices with glass walls.
 - Your expectations for their participation (i.e., to Drop, Cover, and Hold On, after the shaking stops, to gather at a central location to account for occupants, etc.).
 - If away from the office - set a cell phone alarm for the time of the drill, and to encourage those they are with to participate as well.
 - If unable to Drop, Cover, and Hold On during the drill - take pause at drill-time to consider what they would do if an earthquake were to strike at that moment.
 - If your drill is part of a ShakeOut drill, encourage employees, staff, contractors, etc. to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register at www.ShakeOut.org, in their region, so they participate as well and receive information directly.
4. (Optional) Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play during your drill by downloading recordings from www.ShakeOut.org/resources.
5. Steps or Questions to Consider:
 - How will you direct employees during and immediately following the shaking?
 - a. Safety must be the first priority, so carefully assess the environment inside and outside of your facility before deciding. Consider what factors (your location, building type, damage impacts) will influence your decisions after the earthquake (i.e., evacuating vs. staying put).
6. Create a brief written description of the earthquake's potential impacts, along with questions for participants to consider during the drill. For ideas, review the 2008 San Andreas scenario at www.ShakeOut.org/scenario.
 - Tape the description under desks/conference tables, or provide sealed envelopes to be opened during the drill. Email is a last option, as information is more effective when read during the drill.
 - To increase participation, also include a surprise under the desk (candy, light stick, etc.).
7. Distribute ShakeOut posters/flyers to encourage employees, contractors, visitors, etc, to participate. These materials are available at www.ShakeOut.org/resources.
8. Determine the addition of post-shaking evacuation procedures to the drill, if needed.



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Level 2 – Basic: Life Safety Drill (con't)

- **Post-Shaking:** Based on the age and type of your building, and the environment inside/outside of building, etc., determine whether your facility would evacuate after a real earthquake, or whether you would first *assess the building's damage* before directing employees to either stay put or evacuate. Consider new safety hazards outside of your facility caused by the shaking.
- **Post-Earthquake Tsunami Threat:** If your facility is in a coastal area, consider whether or not you will need to have plans to evacuate to higher ground.

DURING the Drill

1. Via, email, cell phone/text message, public announcement (PA) system, or verbal direction:
 - Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
 - (Optional) Play the audio recording (see above) on your PA or, alternatively, play it on a computer in each office.
 - Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what would be falling on them in a real earthquake. Secure or move items after the drill to prevent injury and damage.
2. After at least one minute, announce that the shaking is over and for employees to stand up again.
3. Automatically evacuating after an earthquake may not be a safe action. If your drill includes additional steps or activities such as evacuation to another location, initiate this part of your drill but consider new hazards from fallen or broken objects.
4. Encourage employees to discuss their experiences and observations with one another.

AFTER the Drill

1. Ask for feedback on how the drill went, how it could be improved, and how your government agency, department, office, or facility can be better prepared.
 - Discuss preparedness at work and home. (Employees' home/family preparedness will allow them to either stay at work, or return to work more rapidly, to support your agency's mission to recover and serve the public).
 - Discuss non-first responder employee responsibilities and agency life safety priorities.
2. Follow up with an e-mail reminder about emergency protective actions in an earthquake (e.g. *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*) and encourage employees to practice these actions at home.
3. Share lessons learned from the drill with those people responsible for your agency's emergency response planning to update the plan/procedures and employee training
4. Schedule your next drill one year from now (or sooner) so employees can practice life safety procedures.
5. If you participated in a ShakeOut drill, complete a post-ShakeOut survey if one is available on your ShakeOut region's website.
6. Share your stories and photos at www.ShakeOut.org
7. Encourage employees to prepare at home using the 7 Steps to Earthquake Safety from "*Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country*" (see www.earthquakecountry.org/sevensteps).



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Level 3 – Intermediate: Life Safety and Response Planning Drill

This drill expands upon the Level 2 drill to engage employees to think through their life safety and emergency response actions during and after an earthquake. *It can be used whether or not your government agency has developed a disaster plan (or Continuity of Operations Plan) although if you have one, incorporate it into this drill to become more familiar with procedures.*

BEFORE the Drill

1. If you will participate in a ShakeOut drill, register your Government Agency or Facility as an official participant at www.ShakeOut.org (make sure to register in your state or region).
 - Determine whether registration will be at the jurisdiction/agency level, or whether you will instruct your departments or facilities to register individually.
2. Bring together a team of individuals from your agency to design the drill.
 - Determine or review your emergency procedures for an earthquake.
3. Determine the length of your drill and its objectives.
 - If you have a disaster plan, the objectives and resulting drill can test a specific part of your plan.
 - What would you like your drill to test?
4. If your facility serves the general public, determine whether you will involve them in the drill, treating this similar to a fire alarm during hours of public operation. You can also hold your drill either before or after public hours; however, this limits the employees' opportunity to practice quake-safe actions.
5. Learn about potential earthquakes for your area and use your team to develop your own "agency disaster scenario" with specific details of how you might expect the shaking to impact your agency (i.e., the building, operations, access, employees, and service providers). For ideas, review the 2008 San Andreas scenario at www.ShakeOut.org/scenario. Consider the following:
 - Would the power be out? Phone communications down? Public access points severely damaged?
 - How will you direct employees during and immediately following the shaking?
 - Consider that certain factors (your location, building type, damage impacts) will influence your decisions regarding what to do immediately after the earthquake (i.e., evacuating vs. staying put) and in the longer term (how the public will get to you).
 - Identify who is authorized to make and communicate post-earthquake decisions.
 - If your agency has "floor wardens" for fire evacuation, how will you utilize these personnel for earthquakes, especially if you do not evacuate?
 - Make sure the impacts you determine for your "agency disaster scenario" make it possible to support your drill objectives.
 - Note: Do not "wipe-out" the whole community and eliminate your reason to drill.
6. Write up the final version of your "agency disaster scenario."
7. Invite your agency's elected officials, executives, and key decision-makers to participate in your drill. If you already have a plan, have them review it prior to the drill.
8. (Optional) Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play during your drill by downloading recordings from www.ShakeOut.org/resources.



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Level 3 – Intermediate: Life Safety and Response Planning Drill (con’t)

9. Inform your employees regarding:
 - The date and time of your drill.
 - How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are.
 - a. This includes taking cover beneath a sturdy table or desk, or dropping to the floor near an interior wall and covering your head with your hands and arms.
 - b. Develop special procedures for unique locations such as warehouses and offices with glass walls.
 - Your expectations for their participation (i.e., to Drop, Cover, and Hold On, after the shaking stops, to gather at a central location to account for occupants, etc.).
 - c. If away from the office - set a cell phone alarm for the time of the drill, and to encourage those they are with to participate as well.
 - d. If unable to Drop, Cover, and Hold On during the drill - take pause at drill-time to consider what they would do if an earthquake were to strike at that moment.
 - e. If your drill is part of a ShakeOut, encourage employees, staff, contractors, etc. to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register at www.ShakeOut.org, in their region, so they can participate as well and receive information directly.
10. (Optional) Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play during your drill by downloading recordings from www.ShakeOut.org/resources.
11. Distribute posters and flyers to encourage employees and constituents, etc., to participate in your drill. These materials are available at www.ShakeOut.org/resources.
12. Determine the addition of post-shaking evacuation procedures to the drill, if needed:
 - Post-Shaking: Based on the age and type of your building, and the environment inside/outside of building, etc., determine whether your facility would evacuate after a real earthquake, and how you would first *assess the building's damage* before directing employees to either stay put or evacuate. Consider new safety hazards outside of your facility caused by the shaking.
 - Post-Earthquake Tsunami Threat: If your facility is in a coastal area, consider whether or not you need to have plans to evacuate to higher ground.

The Night BEFORE the Drill

1. Create a brief written description of the earthquake's impact using your "agency disaster scenario" along with some questions for employees to consider.
 - Tape this description under desks and conference tables or provide employees sealed envelopes to open during the drill. (You can use email, but it is more effective if they do not read this until during the drill.)
 - To increase participation, tape a surprise under the desk as an incentive (candy, light stick, lunch coupons, etc.)

DURING the Drill

1. Via your public announcement system, email, cell phone/text reminder or verbal direction:
 - Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and strong shaking could last one minute.
 - (Optional) Play the audio recording (see above) on your PA or, alternatively, play it on a computer in each office.
 - Tell everyone to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* then open the envelope taped under their desk.
 - Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what would be falling on them in a real earthquake, and these items should be secured or moved after the drill.
2. After at least one minute, announce that the shaking is over and for employees to stand up again.



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3. Automatically evacuating after an earthquake make not be a safe action. If your drill includes additional steps or activities such as evacuation to another location, initiate this part of your drill but consider new hazards from fallen or broken objects.
4. Encourage employees to discuss their experiences and observations with one another.

AFTER the Drill

1. Hold staff meetings as soon as possible after the drill to discuss what happened, people's experiences during the drill, what they were thinking about, what caused concern, what worked well and what did not, etc. Take this opportunity to:
 - Discuss preparedness at work and at home. Employees' home/family preparedness will allow them to either stay at work (or return to work more rapidly) to support your agency's recovery.
 - Review government staff emergency responsibilities.
 - Review post-disaster Continuity of Government employee responsibilities and applicable mandates.
 - Update call-back phone lists and go over call-back procedures.
 - Discuss your safety and operations resumption priorities.
 - Include your staff in committees to update your plan with lessons learned from the drill or any real experiences.
 - Listen attentively to staff suggestions.
2. At your management level:
 - Review staff and management emergency responsibilities.
 - Review and recommend updates to Continuity of Government responsibilities and plans to Emergency Management.
 - Discuss call-back procedures and ensure call-back phone lists are up to date.
 - Discuss your safety and operations resumption priorities.
 - Update your disaster plan with lessons learned from the drill.
3. At your department, agency, or jurisdiction management level, meet with those within your organization who are specifically responsible for Emergency Management issues to discuss lessons learned and recommendations for plan updates. Schedule updated employee training, followed by further drills and exercises of emergency response, and Continuity of Government plans.
4. Schedule next drill one year from now (or sooner) so employees can practice life safety procedures.
5. If you participated in a ShakeOut drill, complete a post-ShakeOut survey if one is available on your ShakeOut region's website.
6. Share your stories and photos at www.ShakeOut.org
9. Encourage employees to prepare at home using the 7 Steps to Earthquake Safety from "*Putting Down Roots in Earthquake Country*" (see www.earthquakecountry.org/sevensteps).