

Minor quakes no sign that San Diego's safe

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Seismologists say the small earthquakes that have hit Southern California in the past 10 days have no effect on the chance of a major quake.

"If you had asked me two weeks ago, I would have said a 6.0 earthquake could hit today, or it might hit in 100 years," Patrick Abbott of San Diego State University told the San Diego Union-Tribune. "My answer today would be the same."

Five quakes occurred offshore and two around Lake Elsinore, 70 miles north. All were between magnitude 3.0 and 5.0 on the Richter scale, making them minor or light.

San Diego survived a quake estimated at 6.0 magnitude in 1862 and a 5.3 offshore quake in 1986.

But Graham Kent, a seismologist at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, said there are four faults that could produce a major 7.0 quake. They are Rose Canyon, which cuts through the city, Coronado Banks offshore, and the San Jacinto and San Andreas to the east.

Seismologists say that the southern part of the San Andreas, probably the world's most famous fault line, has been quiet for 300 years and is overdue for a major quake.

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