

Residents of earthquake zones 'drop, cover and hold on' during annual ShakeOut quake drill

October 19 2023



People participate at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

People ducked under desks and tables in California and other earthquake-prone areas around the world for an annual drill held Thursday to practice ways to stay safe during quakes.

Up and down the U.S. West Coast, the ShakeOut drill began at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system that popped onto cellphone screens.

For many, it was the second alert of the day after an errant predawn message hit some phones with a voice message announcing the test. The U.S. Geological Survey said it was likely due to a mix-up in time zones set in the test alert system.

The real thing happened a day earlier, however, when a magnitude 4.2 quake struck southwest of California's capital in the agricultural Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta region.

The tremor triggered a warning from the ShakeAlert system, which detects the start of a quake and sends warnings to areas expected to experience shaking. The quake proved to be weaker than the near-instantaneous initial estimate and no damage was reported.

The ShakeOut earthquake drills are coordinated by the Southern California Earthquake Center at the University of Southern California. The event focuses on the "drop, cover, and hold on" mantra for basic personal safety but also includes such measures as passenger trains slowing down for several minutes.



Workers practice "drop, cover, and hold on" during an after shock simulation at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

At the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank, volunteers and staff got down low or under tables during the drill, then evacuated the building and did an assessment to make sure everyone was safe. They dropped to the ground again, pretending they were protecting themselves from objects that might be falling or flying around in an aftershock.

"We really do recommend that people make themselves a smaller target

from those things that cause injuries," said Mark Benthien, the SCEC communications director and lead ShakeOut organizer.

The ShakeOut drill originated in California in 2008. The first one was based on a scenario of a magnitude 7.8 earthquake on the southern section of California's mighty San Andreas Fault. It's the type of disastrous quake that experts warn will happen someday—although they can't say when.



Workers participate "drop, cover, and hold on" at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



KTLA-5 television reporter Annie Rose Ramos, right, takes cover under a table inside the Big Shaker, the world's biggest mobile earthquake simulator during the ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles, Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



KTLA-5 television reporter Annie Rose Ramos, right, holds on to a table inside the Big Shaker, the world's biggest mobile earthquake simulator as her cameraman tries to record a video during the ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT Thursday with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



KTLA-5 television reporter Annie Rose Ramos, right, reports from inside the Big Shaker, the world's biggest mobile earthquake simulator as her cameraman tries to record a video during the ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT Thursday with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



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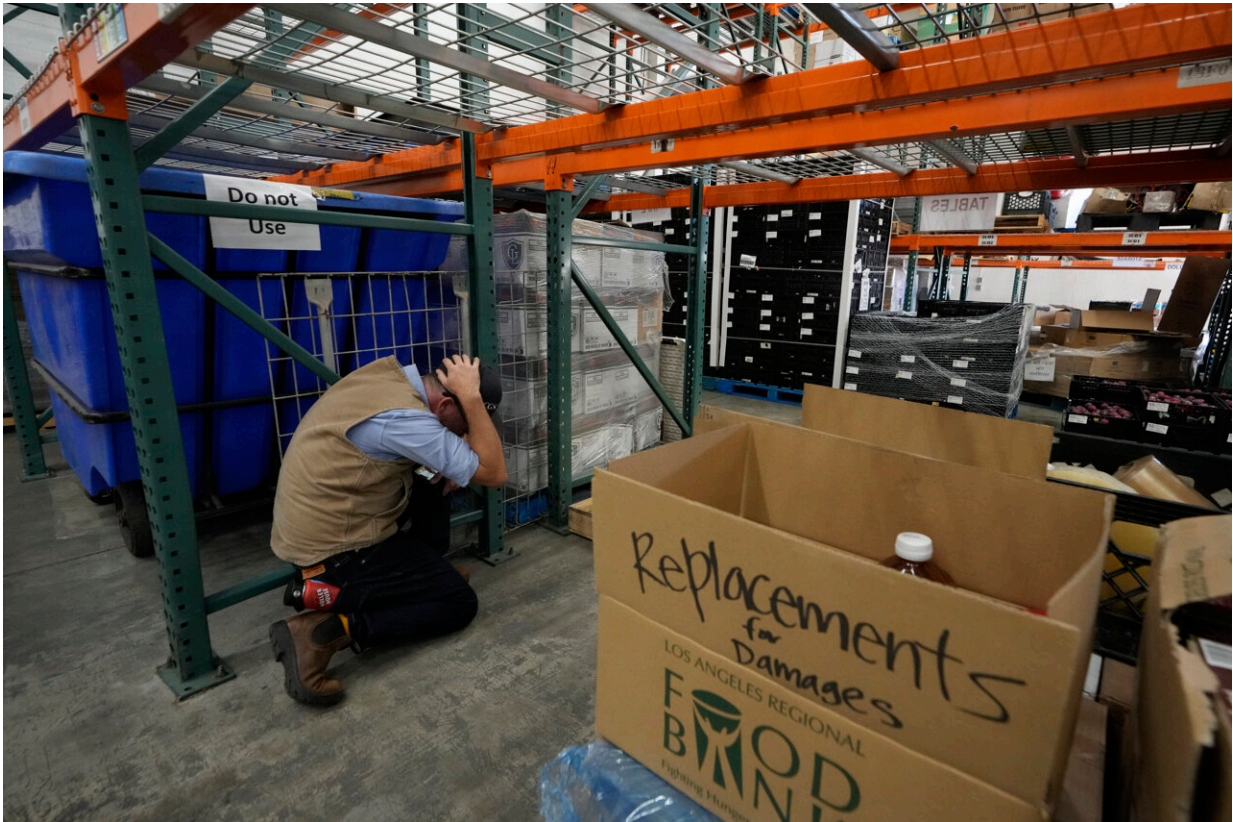
Los Angeles Food Bank custodian Maria Recinos is found safe by her team members as they practice a "drop, cover, and hold on" simulation at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Los Angeles Food Bank custodian Maria Recinos, left, is found "safe" by a team member looking for people left behind inside the building, as they practice a "drop, cover, and hold on" simulation at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



Workers evacuate a sharehouse as they participate on a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



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Los Angeles Food Bank custodian Maria Recinos practices "drop, cover, and hold on" at a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes



A worker practices "drop, cover, and hold on" under a conveyor belt as boxes fall during a ShakeOut earthquake drill at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023. Up and down the West Coast, the ShakeOut drill was scheduled to begin at 10:19 a.m. PDT with a cellphone-rattling test alert from the region's ShakeAlert earthquake warning system. Credit: AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

The drill has since expanded internationally. Schools, government organizations, companies and others sign up to take part. More than 10 million people were registered this year in California, and millions more worldwide, according to organizers.

Compared to 15 years ago, Benthien said, "many, many more people are getting prepared, practicing earthquake safety each year because of

ShakeOut."

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