

# Schools, factories closed after quake 'swarm' near Naples

May 21 2024, by Alice RITCHIE with Louise-Anne SIGAUD

---



Authorities set up a makeshift camp in Pozzuoli in response to the powerful tremors.

Factories and schools near Naples were closed for inspections Tuesday after 150 tremors, including the biggest for 40 years, hit the volcanic

region in southern Italy.

There were no injuries or major structural damage reported but the "seismic swarm"—which included a 4.4-magnitude quake on Monday evening—sparked widespread fear among residents.

"I'm scared. I opened this morning but there isn't anyone because people are scared," Gaetano Maddaluno, a 56-year-old hairdresser in the city of Pozzuoli, told AFP by telephone on Tuesday morning.

The National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV) reported around 150 earthquakes between 0.0 and 4.4-magnitude, including the most powerful for four decades.

Many residents of Pozzuoli rushed out of their homes into the street following the tremors on Monday night, which the local mayor said on Tuesday lunchtime were still ongoing.

Around 80 people slept overnight in a hastily erected shelter in a sports hall, while numerous reception points, including with tents, toilets and temporary cots, were set up for those too scared to go home.

Seismic activity is nothing new in Pozzuoli, located on the Campi Flegrei (Phlegraean Fields), Europe's largest active caldera—the hollow left after an eruption.

But many of the 500,000 inhabitants living in the [danger zone](#) had already been spooked by a 4.2-magnitude quake last September.

"We were so scared, even though people are used to it," an employee of a pizzeria in central Pozzuoli told AFP.

Some residents railed against what they saw as a lack of preventative

action by authorities, including checking how buildings might withstand an even bigger shock.

"My shop has never been checked," said a second hairdresser in Pozzuoli, Nella Aprea, 55.

"Action plans are in place but there are still not enough resources."

## **Inspections**

Emergency services reported cracks and pieces falling from buildings after Monday's quakes, and inspections were ordered across a wide range of sites.

Thirty-nine families were evacuated from 13 buildings, the civil protection department said.

Schools in Pozzuoli were also closed for checks, alongside 18 factories, a municipal cemetery and a fish market, according to Pozzuoli mayor Gigi Manzoni.

Some 140 inmates of the city's women's prison were transferred to other institutions while damage to the jail was examined.

"How long will the buildings be able to hold out while (there are) all these shocks? That's what we wonder," one resident told RAI News television.

Manzoni had on Monday night urged people to remain calm but acknowledged it was a situation that was "stressing us all".

## **Living with it**

The mayor of Naples, Gaetano Manfredi, insisted on Tuesday the situation was "under control", adding: "There is currently no risk of eruption."

But he warned the situation could continue "for months".

"It is very important to live with this phenomenon, trying to maintain normality," he said.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will preside over a special ministerial meeting on Wednesday to discuss the situation, one official said.

The eruption of Campi Flegrei 40,000 years ago was the most powerful in the Mediterranean.

A resurgence of [seismic activity](#) in the [early 1980s](#) led to a mass evacuation which reduced Pozzuoli to a ghost town.

Specialists, however, say a full-blown eruption in the near future remains unlikely.

The INGV recalled on Tuesday that in the 1980s there were more than 1,300 seismic events a month and hydrothermal activity caused the ground to lift by nine centimeters (3.5 inches) a month.

By contrast, around 450 seismic events have been recorded in the last month and the lifting speed remained steady at two centimeters a month.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Schools, factories closed after quake 'swarm' near Naples (2024, May 21) retrieved 16 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-05-schools-factories-quake-swarm-naples.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.