



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(2/3/25) Stay Safe During an Earthquake (February is Earthquake Preparedness Month)

The worst earthquake in Illinois history occurred on December 17, 1811, and was so strong that it rang a church bell in Cairo, Illinois. It also blew smoke, sand, and coal 30 yards into the air and made the Mississippi River flow backward.

February is Earthquake Preparedness Month. According to the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), earthquakes continue to occur on a daily basis in the central United States, with nearly 200 occurring each year. Southern 7 Health Department is encouraging everyone to follow these simple steps from www.ready.gov/earthquakes to keep yourself and your family safe.

Start by being prepared for after an earthquake. Create a family emergency communications plan that includes an out-of-state contact. Plan where to meet if you get separated. And make a supply kit that includes enough food and water for several days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a whistle.

There can be serious hazards after an earthquake, such as damage to the building, leaking gas and water lines, or downed power lines. Once you are safe, pay attention to local news reports for emergency information and instructions via battery-operated radio, TV, social media or from cell phone text alerts.

Next, practice with your family what to do during an earthquake. When the ground starts to shake, protect yourself right away:

- If you are in a car, pull over, and stop. Set your parking brake.
- If you are in bed, turn face down and cover your head and neck with a pillow.
- If you are outdoors, stay outdoors away from buildings.
- If you are inside, stay and do not run outside and avoid doorways.

Drop, Cover, and Hold On! is the best way to stay safe with earthquakes. The phrase reminds people to:

- Drop down to the floor.
- Take cover under a sturdy desk, table, or other furniture.
- Hold on to that object until the shaking ends.

Details on how persons with disabilities reduce injury and death during an earthquake are listed at www.shakeout.org/dropcoverholdon/.

For more information on earthquake preparedness contact Bobi Cavins at Southern 7 Health Department at 618-634-2297 or visit www.iemaohs.illinois.gov/preparedness/earthquake.html and <http://www.cusec.org/>.

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