

Earthquake Preparedness

Earthquakes can happen at any time with little to no warning. In fact, portions of West Tennessee lie along the New Madrid fault line. Preparing for this unique type of emergency can help save precious lives. The information below should help guide you in your efforts to prepare for an earthquake. Be mindful that some earthquakes are actually foreshocks, and a larger earthquake might occur. During a quake, be sure to minimize your movements to a few steps and stay indoors until the shaking has stopped.

Before:

- Planning, Education, and Training:
 - Have students and staff participate regularly in earthquake drills.
 - Regularly update your school's safety plan, including accounting for changes to the school's floor plan and total population.
 - Develop and confirm protocols to facilitate decision making regarding temporary classrooms, special needs students, assembly areas, outdoor activities, etc.
 - Secure items that could topple or fall over during an earthquake, such as bookshelves and items on bookshelves.
- Emergency Supplies:
 - Maintain emergency go kits in each classroom and throughout the school.
[Emergency Operations Planning Emergency Go Kits.pdf \(tn.gov\)](#)

During:

- What to do if you are indoors:
 - **DROP** to the ground; Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there is not a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in the inside corner of the building.
 - Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
 - Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
 - Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load bearing doorway.
 - Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or to try to leave.
 - Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler system or fire alarms may turn on.
 - DO NOT use the elevators.
- What to do if you are outdoors:
 - Stay there.
 - Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
 - Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits, and alongside exterior walls. Ground movement during an

earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake-related casualties result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects.

- What to do if in a moving vehicle:
 - Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
 - Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.
- What to do if trapped under debris:
 - Do not light a match.
 - Do not move about or kick up dust.
 - Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
 - Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

After:

Post-Earthquake:

- Monitor local news and weather broadcasts for updated information.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of the school building and grounds for damage.
- Provide medical assistance to anyone injured during the earthquake.
- Communicate with emergency services and follow their instructions.
- Coordinate with district officials and parents to reunite students with their families.
- Support students and staff emotionally and provide counseling services if needed.

Resources:

The following links provide local and statewide earthquake hazard information:

- [Tennessee Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [TEMA County Mitigation Planning Dashboard](#)
- [University of Memphis Center for Earthquake Research and Information](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency Earthquake Management](#)
- [Great Shake Out](#) Information for Schools
- [Ready.gov](#) Earthquake Information
- [Red Cross](#) Earthquake Safety

The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut is a multi-state drill spanning much of the central United States. This page has information for participants living in Tennessee: [The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut - Tennessee](#)

Points of Contact:

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