



## Press Release

---

Pat Quinn, Governor  
Andrew Velasquez III, Director

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 13, 2009

## **IEMA Encourages Personal Preparedness During Earthquake Awareness Week April 13-19**

*April 18, 2008, earthquake serves as reminder of risk*

SPRINGFIELD – On April 18, 2008, thousands of people throughout the state were awakened by shaking from a 5.4 earthquake centered in southeastern Illinois. One year later, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is reminding people of that event and encouraging them to be better prepared for earthquakes during Earthquake Awareness Week, which runs April 13-19.

“Fortunately, the earthquake last April did minimal damage, but it was a valuable reminder that earthquakes are a very real hazard for people in southern Illinois,” said IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez III. “Disaster preparedness is a message we’re working to spread year-round, but during Earthquake Awareness Week, we want to call special attention to earthquake awareness and preparedness.”

As part of Earthquake Awareness Week, IEMA is developing public information materials that will soon be distributed to libraries, local emergency management agencies and IEMA’s regional offices in Marion, Collinsville and Flora. Earthquake information is also available through the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).

Southern Illinois is susceptible to earthquake effects from two seismic zones: the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which extends from southeastern Arkansas and southwestern Tennessee to southern Illinois; and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone, located in southeastern Illinois and southwestern Indiana. While shaking from a southern Illinois earthquake can be felt as far away as the far northern tip of Illinois, 29 counties in southern Illinois are considered to be most at risk for the effects of a destructive earthquake.

In the winter of 1811-12, three large earthquakes (magnitude 7.5-8.0) and thousands of aftershocks along the New Madrid fault rocked this region. Damage related to these earthquakes was reported up to 1,000 miles away.

“Hundreds of earthquakes have been reported within the state since 1795, with roughly 80 percent of those south of about Interstate 70, and 20 percent north of Interstate 72,” said Bob Bauer, Engineering Geologist with the Illinois State Geological Survey. “While fewer occur in the northern part of the state, an earthquake in 1909 near Chicago is estimated to have been as large as magnitude 5.1. That’s why we ask people to be aware and to prepare for earthquakes throughout the state.”

Velasquez said while it is impossible to accurately predict an earthquake or prevent it from occurring, there are many actions people can take to stay safe both during and after an earthquake.

### **Earthquake Preparedness Tips**

- Plan to hold earthquake drills for your family and business.
- Develop a family reunification plan.
- Make your home and business earthquake safe with such actions as:
  - Strapping water heaters and large appliances to wall studs
  - Anchoring overhead light fixtures
  - Fastening shelves to wall studs and secure cabinet doors with latches
- Learn how to shut off gas, water and electricity in case the lines are damaged.
- Assemble a disaster kit with supplies that will last at least 72 hours, with such items as water, non-perishable food, a first aid kit, flashlight, battery-operated radio, batteries and other necessities to sustain your family for at least 72-hours.

### **Safety Tips During an Earthquake**

- Stay calm and expect an earthquake to last for a few seconds up to a few minutes.
- If inside a building, stay there until the shaking stops (drop, cover and hold). If outside, move away from buildings since bricks from chimneys or other ornamental stone or bricks may be shaken loose.
- When driving, stop safely as soon as possible. Stay in the vehicle until shaking stops. Do not stop vehicles under overpasses or on bridges.

### **Tips for After an Earthquake**

- Check for injuries and render first aid.
- Avoid other hazards (fire, chemical spills, etc.).
- Check utilities (gas, water, electricity). If safe, shut utilities off at the sources.
- Turn on a battery-powered radio and listen for public information broadcasts from emergency officials. Stay tuned for updates.
- Do not use matches, candles or lighters inside.
- Do not use vehicles unless there is a life-threatening emergency.