

## **Not My Fault: It's ShakeOut time again**

Lori Dengler/For the Times-Standard  
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It's October and it's time to ShakeOut. No, I'm not predicting an earthquake. That is the sort of October surprise no one wants or needs. ShakeOut is an easy and fun way to train your body to do the right thing the next time the ground does start shaking.

This year, the ShakeOut falls on October 15th. The first ShakeOut Drill was held in 2008 in Southern California. Led by the USGS, it grew out of a bold idea. First model the likely effects of a major earthquake rupture at the southern end of the San Andreas fault. Figure out how strong the ground motions will be and how it would impact roads, utilities and structures. Then organize a public Drop, Cover and Hold On Drill so people won't be overwhelmed by the scientific information, but also have the basic tool to protect themselves when an earthquake occurs.

5.3 million people signed up for the 2008 ShakeOut Drill. After its success, the drill expanded to the entire State in 2009. In subsequent years, other states and foreign countries joined, increasing participation to become a global phenomenon. Last year, 10.8 million Californians were part of over 17 million participants world wide making it the largest ShakeOut drill ever.

The centerpiece of ShakeOut is the Drop, Cover and Hold On Drill. Since 2009, ShakeOut has been held on the third Thursday of October at the same time as the date. This year, it falls on Thursday, October 15th so the time will be 10:15 am. At 10:15, DROP to the ground and pretend that earthquake shaking just started. The dropping down is the most important part because most injuries in earthquakes are caused by people trying to run out of doors. Use your arm to COVER your neck and head. If there is a table or desk nearby, slide under it and HOLD ON to the leg so that you move with it. If there is nothing nearby, just stay in that one spot.

There are two caveats. First, if you are doing something else at 10:15, don't worry. It's ok to practice the drill a little earlier or a little later. Second, only drop down if it is safe for you to do so. If you have mobility restrictions, just stay where you are. In a chair, bend over if you can

so that your head is below the back of the chair. In a wheelchair or walker, lock the wheels and stay seated. In bed, just stay there and move the pillow over your head if it's easy to do so. Staying in one spot is the really important thing.

Please spend some time this week thinking about what you would do if an earthquake occurred at different times during your daily routine. A little planning ahead of time can make a big difference. Maybe it's a good time to move enormous potted plant on top of the bookshelf right next to your bed, or any other large objects that could fall on you.

On the North Coast, add evacuation to your drill if you live or work in a tsunami zone. If it were a real earthquake, the shaking would be your signal to head to higher ground or inland. Check out the new tsunami maps at [rctwg.humboldt.edu](http://rctwg.humboldt.edu) to find out if you are in the zone.

There won't be any sirens going off at 10:15 on October 15th to let you know when the drill has started. KHSU used to air a ShakeOut broadcast, but that is one more thing we lost when the station ceased to be a community entity. I hope other local broadcasters and KEET will pick up the slack. But if you have signed up to receive MyShake earthquake alerts on your cell phone, you should get a notification that the drill has begun.

I've written about MyShake before (Not My Fault 4/12/20 & 10/23/19). MyShake is an App for Android or iPhones that can warn you of impending shaking a few seconds ahead of time. It is based on the state's ShakeAlert network that detects the first seismic signals seconds after the earthquake rupture begins, rapidly analyzes these first signals, estimating a magnitude and the likely area of strong shaking. Everyone who is subscribed to MyShake in that strong shaking area gets an alert telling them to Drop, Cover and Hold On. For people very close to the epicenter, the notification may arrive a little after the shaking starts. For people 15 or so miles or further away, you should get a few seconds of warning – enough time to prepare yourself and Drop, Cover, and Hold On. The October 15th ShakeOut will be the first time MyShake has been used in test mode for the entire State.

Of course there is a caveat. You will only get MyShake Alerts and the ShakeOut notification, if you have downloaded the MyShake App and you have enabled the location function. The App is free and available at your App store.

ShakeOut 2020 is a little different than in past years. We recognize that most schools and many businesses are operating in a virtual sphere. We are all spending much more time at home. This is a good opportunity to make your home safer – ShakeIn rather than ShakeOut. The ShakeOut website has excellent tips for earthquake safety in the COVID era at <https://www.shakeout.org/COVID-19/>

Please register to participate as an individual, family, business or other organization at [shakeout.org](https://www.shakeout.org). Participating in the ShakeOut drill will help you and your loved ones survive the next strong earthquake with minimal injuries. Surviving is the most important step but it's only step one. Use your experiences from this COVID era and current fire/air quality emergencies to think about what you need to both survive and thrive. Make an emergency plan or develop a new one, get supplies, and talk to your co-workers, family and loved ones.

Remember Mother Nature's October surprise could happen today, this week, or this month and a little preparedness effort now can really make a difference.

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Lori Dengler is an emeritus professor of geology at Humboldt State University, an expert in tsunami and earthquake hazards. All Not My Fault columns are archived at <https://www2.humboldt.edu/kamome/resources> and may be reused for educational purposes. Leave a message at (707) 826-6019 or email [Kamome@humboldt.edu](mailto:Kamome@humboldt.edu) for questions/comments about this column, or to request a free copy of the North Coast preparedness magazine "Living on Shaky Ground."  
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