

# EARTHQUAKE WARNING CALIFORNIA



## Earthquake Warning California

Scientists are still unable to predict earthquakes, but thanks to new technology, individuals and organizations can potentially receive a few seconds of notice to take appropriate safety precautions before an earthquake strikes.

Earthquake Warning California utilizes the California Integrated Seismic Network, which is a partnership between Cal OES, United States Geological Survey (USGS), UC Berkeley, the California Institute of Technology, and the California Geological Survey.

The system uses ground-motion sensors to detect earthquakes that have already started and estimates their size, location, and impact. When it detects a significant magnitude, the system issues a ShakeAlert® Message, providing a warning before shaking begins.

To receive earthquake warnings, individuals and family members can download the MyShake App and ensure phone settings are adjusted to receive emergency alerts, including:

Earthquakes can happen in California at any time, and places of higher-education should be appropriately prepared to react and respond quickly when an earthquake occurs. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) invites faculty, staff, students, and school administrators to take advantage of free mobile device tools that send warnings as soon as shaking is detected, and to develop personal earthquake response plans.

This document is intended to supplement existing emergency preparedness procedures. Please review existing institutional earthquake preparedness plans for full instructions on how to proceed during an emergency.

- **Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs):** No-cost text messages for emergency situations (magnitude 5.0 or higher and Modified Mercalli Intensity IV shaking);
- **MyShake App:** Free smartphone app that provides iPhone and Android users with audio and visual warnings (magnitude 4.5 or higher and Modified Mercalli Intensity III shaking). Available in the Apple App and Google Play stores; and
- **Android Earthquake Alerts:** Android phones with updated operating systems are automatically subscribed to Android Earthquake Alerts, which uses the same technology as the MyShake App.

## Benefits and Applications

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Most higher education institutions in California already conduct earthquake training and drills for students and staff on campus on an annual basis. Most campuses are also equipped with a Public Announcement (PA) system that can communicate audible messages and announcements.

Higher education institutions can incorporate Earthquake Warning California resources as follows:

- Integrate a hard-wired interface between Earthquake Warning California resources and the institution's PA or alarm system, and in residential areas such as dorm rooms or fraternity / sorority houses
- To ensure inclusiveness for people of all abilities, implement additional warning tools such as television screens or blinking lights
- In the event of an earthquake warning, train individuals to verbally instruct others to drop, cover, and hold and if feasible, use the PA system to warn campus community members to take cover

## Getting Campus, Faculty, Staff, and Students Prepared

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Careful and thorough planning can help ensure the safety of campus community members if an earthquake occurs.

Below are five tips that can aid in the preparation process:

- 1. Building Safety.** Ensure school buildings meet current earthquake protection standards. Anchor shelves, audio-visual equipment, and other heavy objects to the wall. Make sure no classroom wall hangings or other items are placed where they might fall and injure others. Encourage distance learning students to pre-identify places to take shelter in the event of an earthquake, such as under a sturdy table. Remind them that doorways do not provide adequate shelter. Do not stand in doorways.

- 2. Update Campus Emergency Plan.** Campuses should update the emergency operations plan that is shared with campus community members and partners (e.g., first responders, local emergency management officials). [Campus Ready](#) offers disaster preparedness resources as well as information on emergency planning and preparedness. Consider how to tailor instructions for remote learning environments. All plans must comply with the American with Disabilities Act.
- 3. Educate Individuals on Roles and Responsibilities.** It's important for individuals to understand their roles and responsibilities before, during and after an emergency, including those in remote learning environments. Higher education institutions should hold regular meetings (at least annually) to educate stakeholders regarding emergency plans and necessary steps to take during campus emergencies, including earthquakes. Information should be displayed throughout buildings and distributed by email to all stakeholders on a regular basis.
- 4. Schedule Drills.** Individuals with emergency response roles should be appropriately trained on actions to take when an earthquake warning is issued. Practice drills provide opportunities to coordinate with community partners and identify gaps or weaknesses in the plan. Consider creating and distributing talking points for instructors to inform students in a classroom or virtual setting regarding emergency response and preparedness.
- 5. Download the MyShake App and Stay Informed.** Higher education institutions typically have strong warning systems in place and are equipped with automatic alarms to contact emergency services. Regularly test these systems to familiarize campus community members with emergency warning sounds. Faculty, students, and staff should be familiar with enabling their mobile phones to alert them of emergency situations (ensuring location settings are set to "always on"). Add links to the MyShake App on campus websites and in emails to students and staff.
- 6. Encourage Faculty, Staff, and Students to Be Prepared.** Remind faculty, staff, and students that earthquakes in California can strike at any time. Individuals should know what to do during an earthquake whether they are on campus, at home, or in other settings. Additional resources and information are available at [www.earthquake.ca.gov](http://www.earthquake.ca.gov).

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### **For more information:**

Earthquake Warning California is managed by Cal OES. It provides individuals, organizations, and communities with easily accessible earthquake warning and emergency preparedness information, as well as resources. For the latest news and resources, visit [earthquake.ca.gov](http://earthquake.ca.gov). Send questions or comments regarding this fact sheet to [earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov).

For information, questions, or comments relating to this fact sheet, email Cal OES at: [earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:earthquakeinfo@caloes.ca.gov).