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## **IEMA Encourages People to Prepare for Earthquakes**

### ***Preparedness actions can prevent injuries, reduce property damage***

SPRINGFIELD – In recognition of the earthquake risk in southern Illinois from the New Madrid and Wabash Valley seismic zones, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management agencies will promote earthquake preparedness throughout February.

“While we don’t experience major earthquakes with the same frequency as the western U.S., some of the most powerful earthquakes to ever occur in the continental U.S. happened along the New Madrid seismic zone about 200 years ago,” said IEMA Director James K. Joseph. “We can’t predict when the next major earthquake will occur, but we can help people learn how to stay safe and reduce damage to their homes.”

In conjunction with Earthquake Preparedness Month in Illinois, IEMA is adding a new 30-second TV spot to the Ready Illinois broadcast preparedness campaign, which is aired in cooperation with the Illinois Broadcasters Association (IBA) Public Education Partnership (PEP) program. The new spot directs people to the Ready Illinois website for information on how to prepare their homes for an earthquake. It will air on IBA member TV stations serving residents of southern Illinois, where the greatest risk of earthquakes in Illinois exists. The spot is also available on the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).

Joseph noted that the actual movement of the ground in an earthquake is seldom the direct cause of death or injury. Most casualties result from falling objects and debris caused by the earth shaking.

Learning how to “Drop, Cover and Hold On” can help people prevent injury during an earthquake. The phrase reminds people to drop down to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk, table or other furniture, and hold on to that object and be prepared to move with it until the shaking ends.

There are several steps people can take to help prevent injuries and property damage at home, such as anchoring bookshelves, overhead light fixtures, wall hanging and large appliances, learning how to shut off gas, water and electricity and placing heavy objects on lower shelves.

More information about earthquake preparedness is available at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).