

This is Troy Nicolini with the National Weather Service with your Community Comment.

One of the hazards that we face living in California is earthquakes. Unlike the hurricanes that have been impacting other parts of the nation, earthquakes strike without warning. That is why it is so important to practice what to do during an earthquake. Practicing when you are calm and your mind is clear is the only way to make that you will do the right thing during the stress of a real earthquake.

Fortunately, if you grew up in California then you probably did earthquake drills in school at least once per year. If you didn't grow up in California then don't worry, you can practice your earthquake drill this Thursday during the great California Shakeout. This statewide drill will occur at 10:18 in the morning. If you forget the time, just remember that it is the same numbers as the date: In other words, the date is October 18, or 10/18, and the drill happens at 10:18 in the morning. Consider setting an alarm to both remind you of the drill as well as to trigger your participation. You can tune to any local radio station since many of them will be announcing the drill on-air. Google California Shake Out to get more information and to register for the Shake Out.

Here's what to do during the drill to practice what to do for a real earthquake:

When the drill starts, drop down to the ground if it is safe for you to do, cover your neck and head with your arm, and, if a sturdy table or desk is nearby, slide under it and hold on. The most important thing is to stay in one spot and don't try to walk. The further you move in a real earthquake, the more likely you are to be injured. One way to remember what to do during an earthquake is to remember the phrase DROP, COVER & HOLD ON.

Note that if you are in a wheelchair then lock the chair wheels and bend over as low as you can.

If you are not in the tsunami zone then DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON is all you have to think about on Thursday. If you are in a tsunami zone, however, remember that a long earthquake means that a tsunami could arrive in as little as 10 minutes. Shake Out is good opportunity to make sure you know how to get to high ground quickly. You can even add a tsunami evacuation drill to the shake out. That is exactly what schools do that that are in the tsunami zone.

So take this opportunity to practice for earthquakes and tsunamis this Thursday at 10:18 in the morning.

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