

September 25, 2013

Dear School Administrators:

I would like to encourage you and your schools to participate in the next Great Central U.S. ShakeOut earthquake drill on Thursday, October 17, 2013 at 10:17 a.m. In February, more than 448,000 students, teachers, and staff throughout Missouri took part in the drill that enables schools to incorporate earthquake awareness and safety tips into classroom instruction.

Organizers of the annual ShakeOut drill have moved the event to October 17 so that the drill in Missouri and nine other central U.S. states will now take place on the same day that people in more than 30 other U.S. states and territories will also be conducting similar drills. This should add to interest in and attention for the ShakeOut's message about safety and preparedness.

The ShakeOut has been organized to increase awareness of the "Drop, Cover, Hold On" method of protecting ourselves during an earthquake. Many items inside buildings are susceptible to falling during an earthquake, so knowing what to do when you feel an earthquake can prevent injuries and deaths. By state statute, schools are required to conduct two earthquake drills each school year. Participation in the ShakeOut will be counted as one of those two required drills.

To make participation in the ShakeOut drill as simple as possible, the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) has a Web page focused on the drill, background about Missouri's earthquake risk, and earthquake preparedness. The Web page, which can be found at http://sema.dps.mo.gov/earthquake_preparedness/, includes:

- A three minute video showing how a fourth grade class takes part in a basic level ShakeOut or "Drop, Cover, Hold On" drill;
- A registration link for the ShakeOut, so your district can be counted;
- Complete information on how to participate in the drill; and
- A drill manual containing instructions for four different levels of drill participation.

Registration is the first step to participation and can be done at <http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/>. Our schools have again taken a leadership role in participating in this important event and showing that we can be prepared for a variety of disasters and other emergencies. I encourage you to join me and thousands of Missourians in participating in the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut at 10:17 a.m. on October 17.

If you have any questions regarding the ShakeOut, please contact Steve Besemer, earthquake program manager at the State Emergency Management Agency, at (573) 526-9232 or steve.besemer@sema.dps.mo.gov.

Sincerely,



Chris L. Nicastro
Commissioner of Education