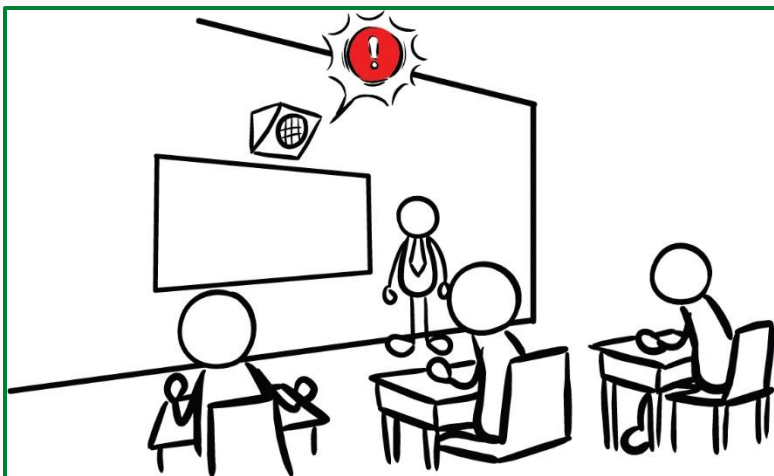


School Safety and Emergency Management

Monthly Minute: Earthquake Preparedness October 2026

Monthly Minute is a newsletter providing insight and tips on potential threats and hazards brought to you by the Oregon Department of Education.



Earthquake! Drop, Cover and Hold On! **The Great Oregon Shakeout** comes around every October and this year it will take place on October 15th. The Great Oregon Shakeout is when we review and practice procedures for earthquake response. Even with the advantage of advanced warning systems like **ShakeAlert**, we may only get seconds or tens of seconds depending on location—not enough time to review what should be done to protect ourselves. Practicing today could save lives tomorrow.

The most important considerations for earthquakes are:

- Keeping students and staff as safe as possible from falling debris and building collapse during the shaking.
- Keeping students and staff away from dangerous

or compromised structures following an earthquake—which is why knowing the structural vulnerability of the school building is important.

Because an earthquake can happen unexpectedly and while we are in unfamiliar locations, the most common and default response to an earthquake is Drop, Cover and Hold On. This is the one everyone needs to practice. For this procedure, students should **DROP** onto their hands and knees which will protect them from being knocked down. They should then **COVER** their head and neck with their arms which will protect them from falling or flying objects. And finally, they should crawl underneath their desks or other cover and **HOLD ON** for shelter while remaining bent over to protect the head and neck.

Identify spots in your usual instructional spaces where students and staff can take cover and hold on. This might be easy in a classroom with desks, but it might be challenging in a gym with no effective overhead cover, or a science lab with shelves of glass containers and other stored material. In these spaces, it is important to remember the purpose of the drill: find an appropriate location that minimizes the risk of falling debris. In a gym, that might be along an interior wall away from wall-mounted objects like scoreboards. If you occupy a space with a greater risk of falling

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This Month... Conduct an earthquake drill this month. If you are in a tsunami zone, consider your evacuation routes and review reunification through a tabletop exercise.

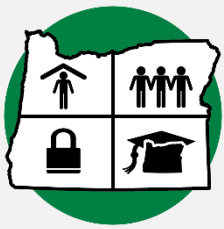


Conduct an earthquake drill in October.

Up Next... November's Monthly Minute will cover communications plans and also address considerations for communicable disease management plans ahead of winter weather.



Conduct a Secure Drill in November.

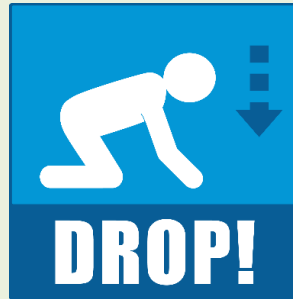


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Monthly Minute: Earthquake Preparedness

October 2026

Here are the steps to take during an earthquake: Drop! Cover! Hold on! Review and practice these steps—or your alternative protective measures—with your students and staff during the Great Oregon Shakeout on October 16th! Visit the [Oregon Shakeout site](#) for resources.



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debris or structural collapse, be sure to identify safe locations to shelter or to safely move from those hazards.

Things to consider if you have to move to a safer location:

- Potential early warning time such as ShakeAlert—more time means more opportunity to find safety or shelter.
- Location within the building, including interior sheltering locations that minimize injury from falling debris (Drop, Cover and Hold On).
- Structural vulnerability to seismic activity and locations inside that could inform response; unreinforced masonry introduces the highest risk.
- Distance and safety of evacuation from high-risk locations such as long hallways, stairwells or large

glass-pane windows. Don't move from one high-risk area to another!

- Individuals, classes and groups with access and functional needs. If they cannot move swiftly or safely, shelter in place as best as possible. Only move away from compromised structures when safe to do so.

If your school is in a tsunami zone, be sure to review evacuation and reunification procedures. Pull out your plans like you would your school team's playbook. Make sure people in **key positions** know how they will handle their part and make sure everyone knows who they report to. For more information on earthquake and other incident-specific planning, review the ODE guidance document on [Incident-Specific Plans](#). And for curriculum on earthquake response, visit the [ShakeAlert Ready Schools](#) page.

Contact Information



Scan or click the QR code to visit the School Safety and Emergency Management website with additional school emergency preparedness resources, and to **sign up for the monthly training** and technical assistance sessions.

Resources

The Great Oregon Shakeout: Get registered for October 15th and get ready to shakeout!

ShakeAlert: Information on the USGS early warning system.

ShakeAlert Educational Resources: for use in the classroom and informal environments.

Oregon Emergency Management [local contacts list](#).