

People, Pets to Take Cover in California 'ShakeOut'

Millions – including some animal groups – will practice earthquake preparedness Oct. 15.

By Marissa Heflin

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More than 6.4 million people have signed up to participate in the "Great California ShakeOut" earthquake drill, scheduled for Oct. 15 at 10:15 a.m. PDT.

The aim is to help all Californians get ready for big earthquakes, and to prevent disasters from becoming catastrophes, according to the Earthquake Country Alliance, which sponsors the event. Participants are urged to drop, cover and hold on, the recommended procedure to protect oneself during an earthquake.

Last year's "Southern California ShakeOut" was such a success, organizers decided to make the event statewide, said Mark Benthien, executive director of the Earthquake Country Alliance.

"We received a lot of requests to go statewide," he said. "Earthquakes can happen anywhere in California."

Those that are participating in the drill include businesses, nonprofit organizations, medical centers, colleges and universities, schools, government agencies and individual families, among others.

Although Benthien didn't have a count of participating animal groups, pet stores or veterinary clinics immediately available, he did offer some advice.

"People need to know how to secure their space, whether it is to protect a human or an animal," he said.

For example, veterinarians may want to take a look at their shelves and cages and make sure they are secured to the walls, Benthien said.

Leo Grillo, founder and president of D.E.L.T.A. Rescue, a nonprofit animal sanctuary located northeast of Los Angeles, already has a plan in place.

On Oct. 15 at 10:15 a.m., Grillo will instruct his medical and administrative staff of 70 to drop to the floor or ground and take cover under a desk or table, or wherever else they happen to be at the moment. They will then hold on as if a real-time earthquake had just ruptured and maintain position for the length of time the instructional California Institute of Technology scenario specifies.

"At our location, the shaking will be for 15 seconds, though Santa Monica will last for 65 seconds," Grillo said.

At Grillo's direction, employees will look around and imagine what would happen in the event of a major earthquake.

"During [the drill], we'll then create mental images of what our lives would be like afterwards," Grillo said. "Our animals will need calming, as will your pets. We must be there for them, soothing their fears."

D.E.L.T.A. Rescue has already stockpiled sleeping bags and ready-to-eat meals for its staff. Water storage tanks have been placed throughout the 150-acre sanctuary and about 1,000 emergency blankets are in ready reserve for the dogs. There is also a two-month supply of dry and canned food for dogs and cats, in addition to hay for horses and burros. (Watch a video on what to keep in your dog's disaster kit)

In addition, the veterinary hospitals are equipped with a six-month supply of emergency medical supplies and pharmaceuticals.

The organization is currently working on emergency electricity, which will be solar-powered. A fully-equipped fire truck and firefighting apparatus are also at the ready.

"While we can not stop a huge shaker from occurring, we can at least get ready for it by making a plan and following it



through to the end," Grillo said. "We all need to be in control of our own survival, for our children's sake and for the best interest of our animals. The countdown has already begun."

The Earthquake Country Alliance is a statewide collaboration of nonprofit, business, government and education partners and regional alliances led by the Southern California Earthquake Center, State Farm Insurance, California Emergency Management Agency, Federal Emergency Management Agency, California Earthquake Authority, Caltech, United States Geological Survey, American Red Cross and California Department of Education, among others statewide.

To register as a participant or for more information, visit Shakeout.org.

DogChannel.com would like to know how you and your pets plan to observe the "Great California ShakeOut." Tell us by submitting a comment below.