



Pierce County

Department of Emergency Management
2501 South 35th Street
Tacoma, Washington 98409-7405
(253) 798-6595

Steven C. Bailey
Director

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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Sheri Badger, Pierce County Department of Emergency Management, 253-798-2204.

Pierce County to ‘Shake ‘n Quake’ next week

A Pierce County-wide earthquake exercise is scheduled to ‘Shake ‘n Quake’ next Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 21 and 22. The first day includes approximately 500 participants from more than 50 agencies throughout Pierce County and the second day focuses on area hospitals, including Good Samaritan, Madigan, St. Anthony, St. Clare, St. Josephs, Tacoma General and Western State hospitals. Even schools – K-12 and colleges – will be participating during the exercise: Bethel School District, MTCI/College of Medical Training, Pacific Lutheran University, Peninsula School District, Sumner School District and the University of Puget Sound.

To make this drill as realistic as possible, the U.S. Geological Survey helped build the scenario and provided the participants with a number of resources and tools to utilize throughout the exercise and ultimately, during an actual event. “USGS staff provided us with an extraordinary level of support and I cannot thank them enough for their commitment to public safety,” said Steve Bailey, Director of Pierce County Emergency Management. “We are better prepared today because of the education and tools they’ve provided.”

The scenario is based on a M7.1 earthquake striking along the Tacoma Fault line, which passes directly through Tacoma, Federal Way, and Gig Harbor. It is predicted that the ground shaking during an earthquake through the Tacoma fault system would cause landslides, liquefaction and possibly a tsunami in the Sound, based on United States Geological Survey (USGS) studies.

During the initial day of the two-day exercise, the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be fully staffed and operational. Other jurisdictions within the county will be conducting their own exercises based on the same scenario, and will be coordinating with the Pierce County EOC. “This is a great opportunity to test communications and coordinating capabilities between our cities, towns and the first responder agencies in Pierce County,” Bailey added.

Every year, Pierce County Emergency Management is required to hold at least one regional exercise. The purpose is to test its written emergency plans and procedures. The specific objectives of this exercise are to evaluate regional communications, to demonstrate coordinated situational awareness collection, and to disseminate information to the public.

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