

After-Action Report

Great Central US Shake Out Drill

October 25, 2018

Summary

On October 18, 2018, Arkansas State University participated in the Great Central US Shake Out Drill. The drill was announced to the campus community through the campus Emergency Alert System and an email from the chancellor. Participation was voluntary, and the drill prompt at 10:18 am was delivered by email from the university safety officer. Participants were instructed to Drop, Cover and Hold On in their current location, then encouraged to take a selfie, post to social media using the #ShakeOutSelfie and tag the university's official Twitter account. Additional earthquake preparedness information was included on the drill prompt email.

The greatest takeaways for the Safety Office comes from the guidance found on the Shake Out website at <https://www.shakeout.org/centralus/index.html>. The fact that building collapse rarely occurs in the US, alongside photos of ceiling tiles and suspended lighting that had fallen on classrooms counters the pessimistic attitude that there is no use in taking action because a small desk will not provide adequate protection. In reality, it is hard to say whether a given building will collapse because it depends on the structure and exactly how the earth will move. We can, however, almost guarantee that a suspended ceiling, including lights and equipment above, will fall. While a small tablet arm desk does not seem like it will provide enough protection, it does provide some protection for their head and neck. It is possible that portions of your body not under cover will still be impacted, but a broken foot is preferable to a severe head injury.

The following report details additional results and areas for improvement identified during the drill and its follow-up activities, along with steps to address the issues noted.

Social Media Participation

University safety officer collected approximately 20 photos from social media that showed A-State students, faculty and staff practicing the Drop, Cover and Hold On guidance. These photos are compiled in an album on the university's official Facebook page. The University Safety Office will look for ways to increase social media participation, including but not limited to better coordination on drill announcements, registering the campus earlier, and more coordination with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. Ideas from the campus and surrounding community are welcome.

There was concern that holding the drill at 10:18 am and using the Emergency Alert System to prompt participation would interrupt classes that had elected not to participate. In the future, A-State will hold the drill at times that will minimize disruption to classes and other events.

Updates to Emergency Procedures

In preparing for the drill, the Safety Office found that the latest earthquake response guidance does not recommend getting in a doorway. This misleading information comes from an early photo of a collapsed adobe home in the aftermath of an earthquake where the doorway was the only thing left standing. However, in most modern homes and buildings, doorways are no stronger than the walls around them. Therefore, A-State has adopted the Drop, Cover and Hold On guidance found on the Great Central US Shake Out website, along with additional guidance to take shelter near an interior wall if there is no study table or desk in the immediate area.

There were also questions about actions to take if a person was unable to get back up on their own due to mobility impairment or disability. Guidance from the Shake Out website advises that if a person cannot get back up on their own, they should shelter near an interior wall and cover their head and neck from a standing position. This guidance will be adopted within a Disability Services Emergency Action Plan, as well as incorporated into the A-State Emergency Procedures Handbook.

The Safety Office welcomes recommendations for improvement from the campus community. Please email jcarvell@astate.edu with any questions, concerns or suggestions. If your photos were not included on social media, please send those as well.