



Central United States Earthquake Consortium

**CUSEC**

*a partnership to mitigate disasters and save lives....*

2630 East Holmes Road  
Memphis, TN 38118  
Voice: (901) 544-3570  
Fax: (901) 544-0544  
E-Mail: [cusec@cusec.org](mailto:cusec@cusec.org)  
Website: [www.cusec.org](http://www.cusec.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 25, 2014

**Sunday's Napa earthquake serves as a reminder:**

*Damaging earthquakes can occur at any time*

**Memphis, Tenn.**— As seen in the recent updates to the [U.S. Geological Survey's](#) National Seismic Hazard Maps, the central U.S. remains susceptible to damaging earthquakes. Based on these maps and current understanding of the regional threat, there is at least a 25-40% chance of a M6.0 or greater occurring in the New Madrid Seismic Zone within a fifty year window. New Madrid, however, isn't the only area in the region that can have large earthquakes. The Wabash Valley Seismic Zone (southeastern Illinois and Southwestern Indiana) and the East Tennessee Seismic Zone (northeastern Alabama and eastern Tennessee) are also capable of producing magnitude 6 earthquakes, which was the size of the August 24th earthquake near Napa, California.

Sunday's Napa earthquake serves as a reminder that earthquakes frequently happen with little to no warning, a problem that the [Central U.S. Earthquake Consortium](#) (CUSEC), its Member and Associate States, the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA), and a variety of public and private sector partners have been working to address in recent years.

For instance, this past June, CUSEC led a major full-scale exercise designed to test emergency multi-jurisdictional response and communication plans. The exercise, known as CAPSTONE-14, identified common functions and systems needed following a major New Madrid event. While many of these systems performed as expected, CUSEC is finishing an exercise "after-action report" which will provide States with a set of regional lessons learned and recommendations.

As part of this on-going central U.S. multi-state earthquake planning collaborative, CUSEC is hosting a special "earthquake orientation" in Memphis on Tuesday, August 26 for newly appointed State Emergency Management Directors from Missouri and Kentucky, who also serve on the CUSEC Board of Directors. Also participating as part of the orientation and mentoring of the new Directors are senior State Directors from Alabama and Mississippi. The purpose of the orientation is to give the new Board members a better understanding of the central U.S. earthquake hazard and its associated risks. Armed with up-to-date information from this orientation, they will be better equipped to prepare their agencies' mitigation, response, and recovery functions for a no notice (seismic) event. CUSEC routinely hosts earthquake orientations for its new State Directors and Earthquake Program Managers, and planning for this orientation began in June.

In addition to these activities, CUSEC is also actively engaged in public outreach and education activities designed to improve earthquake preparedness among the general public. One of the most publicly visible activities is the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut earthquake drill, which will occur on October 16. Following [National Preparedness Month](#) in September, this annual drill involves nearly 3 million people in earthquake safety, mitigation, and preparedness activities. Participants are encouraged to:

- Practice “Drop, Cover, and Hold On”, the recommended personal protective action to take during an earthquake,
- Secure items in their homes and workplaces and,
- Update disaster supply kits and emergency plans.

ShakeOut is coordinated by CUSEC and its Member and Associate States including Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. For more information about earthquake preparedness or mitigation, individuals are encouraged to visit [www.cusec.org](http://www.cusec.org) or [www.shakeout.org/centralus](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus).

###

#### **About CUSEC**

Established in 1983 with funding support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, CUSEC's primary mission is, "... the reduction of deaths, injuries, property damage and economic losses resulting from earthquakes in the Central United States." CUSEC Member States are those most vulnerable to the effects of earthquakes in the region and include Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.