

2025

Public Education Campaign Guide

A guide for local governments to increase community earthquake preparedness and participation in the annual ShakeOutBC drill.

INTRODUCTION

More than 3,000 earthquakes occur in B.C. each year. Most are too small to be felt, but the risk of one big enough to cause significant damage is real. Running a ShakeOutBC public education campaign is a chance for local governments to raise awareness about B.C.'s earthquake risk along with the importance of community emergency preparedness. The ShakeOutBC Public Education Campaign Guide provides cut-and-paste content, news releases, and outreach suggestions for the lead-up to this year's ShakeOutBC drill on October 16.

Get involved

Host a drill

Start by hosting a ShakeOutBC drill. Need help planning? No problem. You'll find a participation guide at shakeoutbc.ca under the "Resources" tab. It includes step-by-step instructions for running a drill, big or small.

Make it count

Register your pledge to participate at shakeoutbc.ca/register/. By registering, you are added to a growing list of organizations that are improving their earthquake preparedness. In 2019, more than 1 million people took part across B.C.

TIP: On shakeoutbc.ca you can see which other organizations have registered. Issue a participation challenge if you don't see a related agency on the list.

Spread the word

ShakeOutBC is a fantastic opportunity to connect with your community and talk about the importance of "Drop, Cover, Hold On." These three simple steps have saved lives and reduced injuries during earthquakes worldwide. It's also a great platform to get people thinking about their general state of preparedness. Do they have an emergency plan? Do they have enough food, water and supplies to last a minimum of three days? Have they secured their homes to prevent furniture, cabinets and appliances from toppling? What follows are some simple outreach and education activities to boost awareness within your organization and among the general public.

Social media

Social media is fast becoming people's preferred source for preparedness information. To capitalize on that, ShakeOutBC has created a stand-alone social media guide to support your online outreach. You'll find the complete [handbook](#) on shakeoutbc.ca under "Resources". In the meantime, connect with us online:



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ShakeOutBC>



Twitter: @ShakeOutBC <https://twitter.com/ShakeOutBC>



Instagram: @ShakeOutBC <https://instagram.com/shakeoutbc/>

TIP: No time to schedule a social media campaign? Then just follow @ShakeOutBC on Twitter and retweet. Prefer Facebook? You can find us there too at www.facebook.com/ShakeOutBC.

Host an open house

Consider hosting a special event to build buzz about the ShakeOutBC drill. A fire hall or emergency operations building is a great place to get people talking about earthquake and emergency preparedness.

Be visible

If the people won't come to you, go to them! Stage an event or man a kiosk in high traffic areas, such as shopping centers, libraries or community centers. Hand out printed materials so people have a resource to reference at home. ShakeOutBC's [tri-fold brochure](#) is available for download at shakeoutbc.ca/resources.

TIP: Get creative! Other great events include:

A disaster bike tour or race that demonstrates how bikes can aid earthquake response. A disaster chef competition that challenges cooks to make meals from emergency kit supplies. A competition for the best and most creative add-on to the ShakeOutBC drill.

Visit schools

Reach out to your local school district and offer to do a presentation about "Drop, Cover, Hold On" and earthquake readiness. Kids will take that message home to mom and dad and influence their family's emergency preparedness.

Work with media

Hosting a ShakeOutBC drill at your workplace, municipal hall or school? Let your local newspaper, radio station or TV station know. It's a chance to demonstrate how your organization is preparing while educating a broader audience. See the guide's *Materials & Resources* section for a template news release, as well as suggested columns and PSAs for local media.

TIP: Be proactive and reach out to media early. Follow-up and always include contact names and phone numbers so reporters can easily get in touch. If possible, assign someone to be a spokesperson.

You can also register your event by e-mailing us at office@shakeoutbc.ca and be included in a running list of venues across B.C. This will help give it a higher profile.

Stay on message

People have a lot on their minds, so staying on point when talking about ShakeOutBC or earthquake preparedness is critical. Below are some key messages to consider when giving presentations, talking to media or creating earthquake related content for a website.

- If you feel an earthquake, take the following steps:
 - **DROP** to the ground (before the earthquake drops you).
 - Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy desk or table, and protect your head and neck.
 - **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops.
 - **STAY THERE** for 60 seconds, giving unstable objects time to settle.
- Earthquakes can cause tsunamis. **If you live in a tsunami zone:**
 - **DROP, COVER and HOLD** on during the earthquake.
 - When the shaking stops, **GO TO HIGHER GROUND**.
 - **STAY THERE**. Tsunami waves may continue for several hours.

Increased awareness about what to do during an earthquake reduces injuries and deaths. It also limits the number of people requiring immediate assistance from first responders.

Be prepared, not scared.

- **Know the earthquake (and tsunami) risk** for your region.
- **Create an emergency plan** for your family so everyone knows what to do in the event of an earthquake.
- **Build an emergency kit** that includes a minimum three-day supply of food and water.

We're in it together. The more prepared governments, industries, individuals, and businesses are, the faster we'll collectively recover from a significant earthquake.

Spread the word!

ShakeOutBC Website

shakeoutbc.ca is your one-stop shop for all things ShakeOutBC. Feel free to print or share any information posted there. Can't find what you're looking for? Drop us a line at info@shakeoutbc.ca.

Web Graphics

Find a variety of banners and graphics to help promote ShakeOutBC on your website or social media channel at shakeoutbc.ca/media-resources

Posters & Flyers

Print your own flyers and posters at shakeoutbc.ca/media-resources

Videos

Add a multi-media presence to your public education outreach. Videos can be found at shakeoutbc.ca/media-resources as well as on the [ShakeOutBC YouTube Channel](#).

Swag

"Drop, Cover, Hold On" in style with ShakeOutBC baseball hats, bags, and SWAG. They can be purchased online at: shakeoutbc.ca.

ShakeOutBC Drill Manual

Our ShakeOutBC drill manual will help you plan a "Drop, Cover, Hold On" event – big or small. You'll find it at shakeoutbc.ca under the resources tab. You'll also find information on how to incorporate a tsunami component if you're located in a risk area.

ShakeOutBC Drill Broadcasts

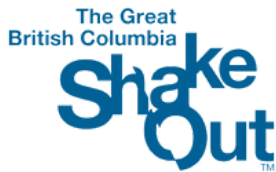
Audio and video recordings for the two minute drill are available at shakeoutbc.ca/media-resources/drill-guides-links/

ShakeOutBC Broadcasters List

All radio and TV stations are encouraged to participate in ShakeOutBC by broadcasting the "Drop, Cover, Hold On" drill. Add your station to the participant's list:
shakeoutbc.ca/participant-map/radio-tv-drill-broadcasters/

News Release

Another way to get the media's attention is issuing a news release. To make things easy, below is a template you can use or customize for your government or organization. Just add your logo and relevant local information.



For Immediate Release (DATE)

Be part of Canada's largest earthquake drill

(YOUR CITY) – On October 16, thousands of British Columbians will take part in Canada's largest earthquake drill. At exactly 10:16 a.m., participants from across the province will "Drop, Cover and Hold On," practicing the internationally-recognized response for earthquake safety.

(YOUR CITY/REGIONAL DISTRICT) is committed to taking part and would like all area residents, businesses and organizations to join in. During the drill, participants will be asked to "Drop, Cover and Hold On" for up to two minutes in response to a simulated earthquake. These three simple steps have been proven to reduce injuries and deaths during major earthquakes worldwide," said **(SPOKESPERSON NAME & TITLE)**

"Practicing what to do helps ensure a better earthquake response and faster recovery for our community."

"Drop, Cover, Hold On" urges individuals to:

- Drop to the ground (before the earthquake drops you);
- Take Cover by getting under a sturdy desk or table; and,
- Hold On until the shaking stops.

In 2019, more than 1 million British Columbians participated in the drill, joining over 29 million people worldwide. [Register](#) yourself or your organization today at shakeoutbc.ca. The annual drill is also an excellent opportunity to consider whether you're personally prepared for a major emergency. For more on getting ready, visit shakeoutbc.ca and preparedbc.ca

Learn about **(YOUR CITY)'s** preparedness efforts, by visiting **(YOUR CITY'S WEBSITE)**.
(Your organization's media spokesperson with contact information.)

Columns for Print Media

Community newspapers often look for columns from emergency officials about preparedness, especially when twinned with high profile events like ShakeOutBC. Use the two columns below as inspiration or submit one of drafts below.

Column #1 Would you be ready for an earthquake if it struck today? Do you know what to do when the ground starts shaking? Do you have an emergency kit? These important questions are the foundation for the Great British Columbia ShakeOut – Canada’s largest annual earthquake drill. British Columbia sits in an active earthquake region where more than 3,000 earthquakes occur each year. There’s a one-in-ten chance that one of those could be a megathrust quake within the next 50 years. ShakeOutBC is a way to get people thinking about the risk and how to get ready.

During the drill, participants are asked to practice "Drop, Cover and Hold On", which means dropping to the ground, getting under a sturdy desk or table, protecting your head, and holding on until the shaking stops. These three simple steps have been proven to reduce injuries and save lives in earthquake zones worldwide. The drill also encourages people, businesses and governments to consider their state of emergency readiness, such as creating emergency plans and building emergency kits that have a minimum seven-day supply of food and water. The more prepared we are today, the faster our recovery will be following a significant earthquake. For more information and to register for the Great British Columbia ShakeOut, go to shakeoutbc.ca. For information about your community’s local emergency planning visit **(YOUR WEBSITE HERE)**. Hope you’ll join us!

Column #2 On October 16, people across the province will participate in the Great British Columbia ShakeOut, an earthquake drill that encourages all residents to “Drop, Cover and Hold On”. The drill takes fewer than five minutes but will make a lifetime of difference. The more prepared you and your community become, the faster you’ll recover following a significant earthquake. So, what will you do when the ground starts shaking? First responders and emergency officials around the world advocate using the internationally-recognized "Drop, Cover and Hold On" protocol to save lives:

- DROP to the ground (before the earthquake drops you);
- Take COVER by getting under a sturdy desk or table; and,
- HOLD ON to it until the shaking stops.

If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your head and neck with your arms and crouch in an inside corner. Do not try to run to another room. Earthquakes occur without warning and may be so violent you cannot run or crawl. You will most likely be knocked to the ground wherever you happen to be. Studies of injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes in the United States indicate you are much more likely to be injured by falling or flying objects than to die in a collapsed building. "Drop, Cover, Hold On" offers the best overall level of protection.

As with anything, practice makes perfect. Sign up for the annual Great British Columbia ShakeOut on October 16 at shakeoutbc.ca. For information on how your community is preparing, go to **(INSERT YOUR WEBSITE HERE)**.

Public Service Announcements

Consider voicing a public service announcement for your organization or community. Below are a few scripts to consider.

PSA 1: Don't leave it to luck. Get the facts on how to protect yourself during an earthquake by participating in the Great British Columbia Shakeout on October 16. Register today at shakeoutbc.ca and join other British Columbians for the annual "Drop, Cover, Hold On" drill.

PSA 2: It's an earthquake. You only have seconds. Do you know what to do when the ground starts shaking? Find out by participating in the Great British Columbia ShakeOut on October 16. Register today at shakeoutbc.ca and other British Columbians for the annual "Drop, Cover, Hold On" drill.

PSA 3: How prepared you are for an earthquake will determine how quickly you and your community recover. Take the first step by participating in the Great British Columbia ShakeOut on October 16. Register today at shakeoutbc.ca and join other British Columbians for the annual "Drop, Cover, Hold On" drill.

PSA 4: "Drop, Cover, Hold On" – three words that could save your life during an earthquake. Join other British Columbians as they practice this life saving technique during the Great BC ShakeOut on October 16. Register today at shakeoutbc.ca.