



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro News

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The Great California ShakeOut

L.A. Metro Offers Tips on What to Do if Riding Transit System During an Earthquake

In observance of The Great California Shakeout earthquake drill on October 19, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) offers several potentially life-saving tips if commuters are riding a Metro bus or train during a major earthquake.

“Safety is Metro’s top priority, and that means making sure our riders know what to do in case of an emergency,” said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Board Chair Eric Garcetti. “These safety tips will help us all be better prepared for earthquakes that are a matter of ‘when’ not ‘if.’”

Members of the public who are at any Metro facility are instructed to immediately “Drop, Cover and Hold.” For those riding the bus or rail system during an earthquake, here are the steps they should take to help ensure their safety.

If onboard a bus:

- Stay onboard unless instructed otherwise by the bus operator.
- When the shaking has stopped, the bus operator will stop at the first available safe area away from overpasses, tall buildings, electrical wires or other hazards.
- If evacuation from the bus is necessary, the bus operator will first survey conditions outside for any unsafe conditions and direct bus passengers to a safe area.
- Metro’s Bus Operations Control Center will monitor buses to assist with any emergencies. The control center will broadcast instructions to operators and allow them to proceed when it is safe to do so.

If onboard a train or in a station:

- The train operator will stop the train until the shaking stops and make announcements to keep passengers informed of the situation.
- If you are in a train or station on Metro’s underground system, you may not be aware an earthquake is occurring. Sensors will alert Metro personnel that an earthquake is underway

and emergency procedures will go into effect. If the magnitude of the earthquake is sufficient to cause damage to rail infrastructure, automatic shutdown will occur.

- Once it is safe to do so, the train will proceed at a reduced speed to the next station with street-level trains avoiding all underground areas, elevated stations and all stations with under- or overhead structures.
- If the train cannot proceed and it is unsafe to remain in place, the train operator will instruct riders to evacuate the train and walk to the nearest station or emergency exit to a safe location.
- Depending on the magnitude of the earthquake, rail system maintenance engineers may be dispatched to inspect the system before the train can proceed. Field supervisors will be sent to assist with any inspections or evacuations required.
- Metro Rail Operations will monitor the rail system to handle any emergencies. It will broadcast instruction to operators and allow them to proceed along the route when safe.

“Metro has numerous rigorous protocols in place to help ensure the safety of our 1.3 million daily riders during an earthquake,” said Metro CEO Phillip A. Washington. “It’s not a matter of if, but when a major quake strikes our region. We urge all our customers to be mindful and prepared.”

Overall, the Metro Rail system was well constructed to withstand large seismic events. Since underground structures move with surrounding soil, the Metro Rail system would not sustain damage or suspend train service in a low-magnitude earthquake. If a stronger earthquake were to occur, the Metro system would likely only experience minor, repairable damage.

During the 6.7 magnitude Northridge earthquake in 1994, for example, the epicenter was only nine miles away from the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station. No Metro structures sustained damage and subway service was not adversely impacted.

On October 19 at 10:19 a.m., Metro will participate in the Great California ShakeOut earthquake drill by stopping Metro Bus and Rail Lines for up to 30 seconds. For more information about this statewide drill, please visit <https://www.shakeout.org/california/>.

For more Metro information on earthquake preparedness or to download Metro’s Emergency Preparedness Guide, please visit <https://www.metro.net/riding/safety-security/>.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is unique among the nation’s transportation agencies. Created in 1993, Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that transports about 1.3 million passengers daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines. The agency also oversees bus, rail, highway and other mobility-related building projects and leads transportation planning and programming for Los Angeles County.

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