



# MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### EARTHQUAKE TERMS

**PEARL** -- While earthquakes have been recorded throughout Mississippi, the greatest risk of earthquake damage in our state comes from the New Madrid seismic zone. The southern end of the 200-mile long zone is in Arkansas, about 40 miles from the northwest corner of Mississippi.

As part of Earthquake Awareness Week, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and local emergency management directors encourage Mississippians to learn the following terms:

- **Aftershock:** An earthquake of similar or lesser intensity that follows the main earthquake.
- **Earthquake:** A sudden slipping or movement of a portion of the Earth's crust, accompanied and followed by a series of vibrations.
- **Epicenter:** The place on the Earth's surface directly above the point on the fault where the earthquake rupture began. Once fault slippage begins, it expands along the fault during the earthquake and can extend hundreds of miles before stopping.
- **Fault:** The fracture across which displacement has occurred during an earthquake. The slippage may range from less than an inch to more than 10 yards in a severe earthquake.
- **Magnitude:** The amount of energy released during an earthquake, which is computed from the amplitude of the seismic waves. A magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter Scale indicates an extremely strong earthquake. Each whole number on the scale represents an increase of about 30 times more energy released than the previous whole number represents. Therefore, an earthquake measuring 6.0 is about 30 more times more powerful than one measuring 5.0.
- **Seismic Waves:** Vibrations that travel outward from the earthquake fault at speeds of several miles per second. Although fault slippage directly under a structure can cause considerable damage, the vibrations of seismic waves cause most of the destruction during earthquakes.

Governor Haley Barbour declared this week Earthquake Awareness Week in Mississippi to help raise awareness throughout the state.

For information on preparing an all-hazards disaster survival kit and tips for protecting your property against earthquakes, visit MEMA online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org) and click the "Preparedness" link. Additional information is available from Central United States Earthquake Consortium at [www.cusec.org](http://www.cusec.org), the U.S. Geological Survey at [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov) and from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov).

For more information, visit us online at [www.msema.org](http://www.msema.org).

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*"Disaster Preparedness Saves Lives and Property"*

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