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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2004
Contact: Eric Lamoureux (916) 845-8400

State OES Reminds You: Take Steps to Protect Yourself During an Earthquake

SACRAMENTO – In your home, at work, driving your car, or walking outside — do you know what to do to protect yourself when an earthquake strikes. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is reminding all Californians to take steps to be ready.

"Yesterday's 6.0 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks reminds us all that we live in earthquake country and to practice how to protect ourselves during an earthquake," said OES Director Henry Renteria. "When the earth starts shaking it is too late to figure out where the safe spots are in your home or workplace."

Here are some suggestions on how to protect yourself during an earthquake.

In your home or a building -- DROP, COVER, and HOLD under a sturdy table or desk, hold on, and protect your eyes by pressing your face against your arm. If there is no table or desk, move to a nearby inside wall, crouch down and protect your eyes and head with your arms as best you can.

Outside – Find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.

In your car – Slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

Above all – If you are indoors, do not rush outside. If you are outside, do not rush into a building. You are more likely to be injured by falling items while going outside or hit by items falling off the building you are trying to leave or go back to.

Extensive research into the causes of earthquake injuries and deaths supports the use of the Drop, Cover, and Hold procedure. Most injuries in California earthquakes occur when building occupants attempt to leave buildings or move to a different location in the building. In the recent San Simeon earthquake, two people were crushed by falling debris when they exited the building. Studies of the 1979 El Centro, 1987 Whittier, 1989 Loma Prieta and 1994 Northridge earthquakes confirm this pattern of injuries, and that use of the Drop, Cover, and Hold procedure reduces the likelihood of serious injury from a collapsed building and falling objects.

OES provides more information on preparing for disasters and other emergencies on its Web site – www.oes.ca.gov.

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