



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Long Beach earthquake anniversary brings reminder of earthquake risk in California**

(SACRAMENTO) Saturday marks the 85th anniversary of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, a magnitude 6.4 quake that caused 120 deaths and massive damage equivalent to nearly \$1 billion today. The earthquake struck about three miles south of Huntington Beach on the Newport-Inglewood fault and is now remembered primarily for the damage it caused to area schools: 70 schools were destroyed, and dozens of others were severely damaged.\*

Fortunately, because the earthquake occurred just before 6 p.m., schools were not in session. Still, following the quake, the California Legislature acted to improve school safety and quickly passed a bill giving the State Division of Architecture authority to design and approve public-school construction. The Field Act, named after the legislation's key sponsor, Assemblyman C. Don Field, was signed into law just 30 days after the Long Beach earthquake. Additional acts promoting building safety—the 1933 Riley Act (requiring establishment of local departments to regulate construction) and the 1939 Garrison Act (extending Field Act standards to existing schools)—followed.

“Legislators at the time of the Long Beach earthquake saw how these buildings had performed, and the incredible damage the quake had caused, and realized schools and other buildings needed to be better constructed to resist seismic events,” said California Earthquake Authority (CEA) CEO Glenn Pomeroy. “History can help teach us how to become better prepared. The key is to learn from the past and act now—before the next damaging earthquake strikes.”

The Newport-Inglewood fault remains a serious risk to residents of the greater Los Angeles area, as do other faults in the region. An earthquake like the Long Beach earthquake could extensively damage single-family homes. Being prepared for such an event might include [retrofitting](#) older houses, which tend to be more vulnerable to earthquake damage.

“The city of Long Beach has many older houses—citywide, the average date of residential construction is 1953, well before modern building codes,” said CEA Chief Mitigation Officer Janiele Maffei. “And it’s similar for many California communities. Californians with older houses should really consider seismic retrofitting to strengthen their homes against earthquake shake damage.”

Californians should prepare in other ways, as well, such as with earthquake insurance to reduce their risk of financial loss. The number of Californians purchasing CEA earthquake insurance has [increased dramatically in the past two years](#). CEA gained more than 90,000 policies in

2017—and in Los Angeles County alone, there are now more than 313,000 CEA policies in force. CEA provides earthquake insurance for homeowners, mobilehome owners, condo-unit owners and renters. Owners who properly retrofit their mobilehomes or older houses can receive a discount on their CEA earthquake insurance premium.

It's also important to know what to do when the ground starts shaking. An estimated two-thirds of the deaths caused by the Long Beach earthquake occurred because people were hit by falling debris as they attempted to leave buildings. The [best way to prevent injury during an earthquake](#) is to drop where you are, cover your head and neck (and crawl under a sturdy desk or table, if possible, for shelter), and hold on until the shaking stops.

For more tips on preparing for a damaging earthquake, visit [CEA's website](#).

### **About CEA**

The California Earthquake Authority (CEA) is a not-for-profit, privately funded, publicly managed organization that provides residential earthquake insurance and encourages Californians to reduce their risk of earthquake loss. Learn more at [EarthquakeAuthority.com](#).

\*Information about this earthquake's magnitude and the damage it caused came from the [Southern California Earthquake Data Center website](#) and the [California Department of Conservation](#). The 2018 dollar amount was calculated using the California Bureau of Labor Statistics' [CPI inflation calculator](#), without adjusting for significant changes in the area's population density, building types or other factors. Information about legislation passed after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake came from the [Western States Seismic Policy Council](#) and the Alfred E. Alquist [California Seismic Safety Commission](#), as well as other public sources.

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