



VITEMA VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USVI to Participate in The Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) invites all residents, businesses, schools, and organizations throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands to participate in The Great ShakeOut, the world's largest earthquake preparedness drill, on **Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 10:16 a.m. AST.**

The Great ShakeOut is an annual opportunity for individuals and communities to practice the critical safety steps that can protect lives during an earthquake: **Drop, Cover, and Hold On.** The U.S. Virgin Islands sits in an active seismic zone, making earthquake preparedness essential for every resident and visitor.

How to Participate

Participation is simple and can be done wherever you are on March 20th:

- **DROP** to your hands and knees
- **COVER** your head and neck under a sturdy desk or table, or against an interior wall
- **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops

Residents, schools, businesses, and community organizations are encouraged to register at www.shakeout.org/usvi to officially join millions of participants worldwide. Registration is free and provides access to valuable earthquake preparedness resources and planning materials.

Emergency Alert System Test

As part of the exercise, VITEMA will be conducting a test of the Emergency Alert System through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). **Residents should expect a test message to be delivered to their mobile phones on October 16th.** This system-wide test is separate from the Alert VI system and does not require residents to opt-in to receive the alert.

"Earthquakes can occur without warning, and being prepared can mean the difference between life and death," said Director Jaschen of VITEMA. "The Great ShakeOut gives us all an opportunity to practice our emergency response and ensure our families, workplaces, and communities are ready when disaster strikes."



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Beyond the Drill

VITEMA encourages all territory residents to use this opportunity to:

- Create or update family emergency plans
- Assemble or refresh emergency supply kits with water, food, medications, and essential supplies
- Secure heavy furniture and objects that could fall during shaking
- Learn how to shut off utilities if needed
- Identify safe spots in your home, workplace, and school

About The Great ShakeOut The Great ShakeOut is a global earthquake preparedness initiative that began in 2008. Each year, millions of people worldwide practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On to improve their earthquake response and overall disaster readiness.

VITEMA is the sole Virgin Islands government agency designated to supervise, administer, and coordinate all-hazards response and recovery operations. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state, and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits, and businesses - VITEMA ensures the Territory's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and building the capacity to recover.

VITEMA - St. Croix – 340-773-2244 – St. John – 340-776-2244 – St. Thomas – 340-774-2244 - Be Prepared, Stay Informed, and Be Vigilant!

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