



21 September 2026

VI to Join World's Largest Earthquake Exercise

The Virgin Islands will join ShakeOut, a global earthquake simulation exercise to teach and practise earthquake safety, on October 15.

Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn said that the Department of Disaster Management will work closely with response agencies and partners in the public service to test public alerting, inter-island coordination, and emergency response plans.

“ShakeOut is an opportunity to work with partners across the Territory to ensure the VI’s readiness for a major impact such as a damaging earthquake,” Mr. Penn said. “Members of the public will hear the activation of the National Early Warning Multi-hazard Alert System, and they may see some evacuation activities happening from entities that evacuate as that part of their response plan.”

Mr. Penn added that self-led drills like ShakeOut give schools, workplaces, families and organisations flexibility to practise earthquake safety in a way that works for them.

“We know that practising earthquake safety may look different in each setting,” Mr. Penn said. “Earthquakes can happen at any time and without warning, so it’s very important that persons do practise and feel confident in their plans.”

ShakeOut participants in the Virgin Islands are encouraged to register and be counted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/shakeout2026>. Then, on October 15, participants should:

- Listen for the early warning system alert that the drill has begun
- Drop, cover and hold under a table or desk; or crouch low near an interior wall, covering the head and neck, for 60 seconds. Participants may wish to add post-earthquake activities such as moving to a tsunami assembly area, evaluating the building for damage, or testing emergency communication procedures
- Discuss the experience as a team and improve plans as needed

For advice on personalising an earthquake exercise or other steps to decrease risks from an earthquake, contact DDM at 468-4200 or ddm@gov.vg. A guide to improving earthquake safety is available at www.bviddm.com/download/seven-steps-to-earthquake-safety.

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Note to editors: Photo included

Caption: Students from the Joyce Samuel Primary School in Tortola participate in the October 16, 2025 ShakeOut exercise. (Credit: File photo)

About the Department of Disaster Management:

The Department of Disaster Management was established to protect lives and maintain a resilient, sustainable economy and society by fostering comprehensive disaster management and climate change adaptation as a way of life. The Virgin Islands disaster management programme is accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Programme.

About the ShakeOut:

ShakeOut began in Southern California in 2008 as a drill designed to educate the public about how best to protect themselves during a large earthquake, and how to get prepared. The Virgin Islands has participated in ShakeOut each year since 2018, joining residents from more than 40 other countries and territories including the US, Puerto Rico, Canada, New Zealand, Mexico, Greece, and others.

For Additional Information Contact:

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