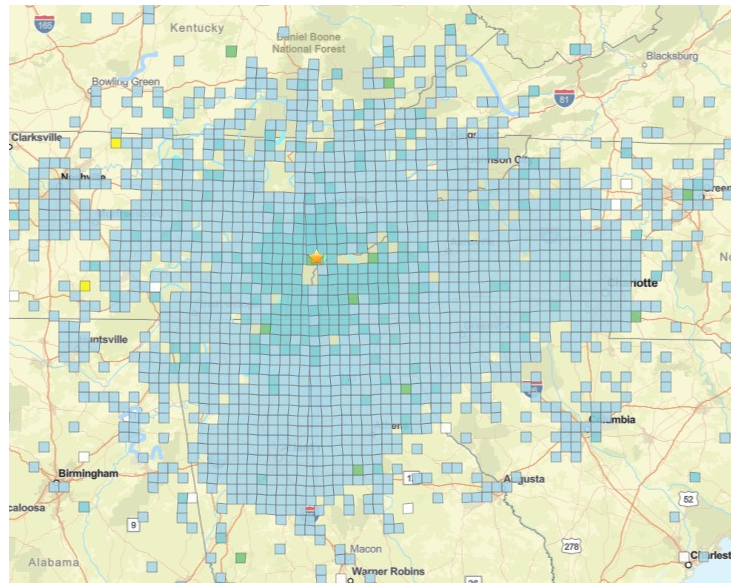


# The Great Shakeout: Not Just a Drill.



**“When Everything Else Fails. Amateur Radio often times is our last line of defense...When you need amateur radio, you really need them.”**

**The Hon. W. Craig Fugate**

Administrator, US Department of Homeland Security, FEMA

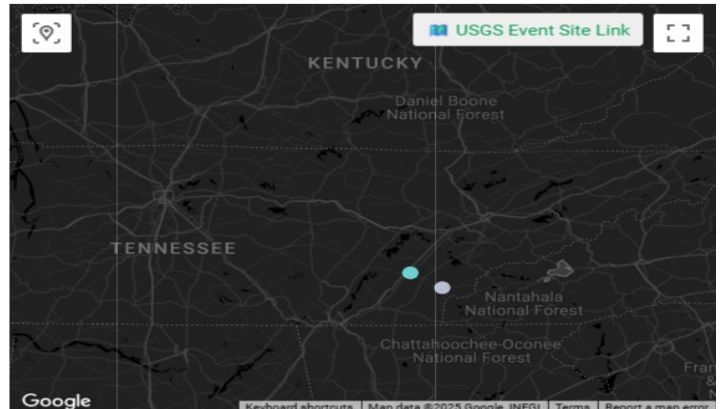
## Have you heard of the Great Shakeout?

That is the name of an annual drill that is conducted each October. People all across the globe take part in sending in Did You Feel It (DYFI) reports to the United States Geological Survey. In the 2024 “Shakeout year”, over **56,650,277** individuals registered for the event. Of those nearly 57 million, 441,295 of them call the great state of Tennessee home. Now to the nitty-gritty... only 135 of those registered were registered as an Amateur Radio Volunteer Group.

To participate in the event, you can send in a DYFI report online by going to the USGS website. This report is not just for the annual drill, Anyone who experiences an earthquake can submit a report for that real-life event. If you feel a tremor, you can go to <https://earthquake.usgs.gov/data/dyfi/> and see a list of recent phenomena and click to report what you felt. You can even report events that are not on the list if you don't see something that would correlate to your area. These reports are aggregated into an interactive map viewer, as seen above.

As you probably guessed, the header image is a screenshot of DYFI reports relating to the 4.1 magnitude earthquake that shook East Tennessee on the morning of May 10, 2025. The reference number for that event is se60605931, if you'd like to look up the data and reports.

DYFI Reports from Radio Operators



May 10<sup>th</sup> earthquake reports by amateur radio operators

Now back to the Great Shakeout. LAXNORTHEAST, the northeast Las Angeles ARES group (<https://www.laxnortheast.org/home>), has an annual exercise that coincides with the Great Shakeout. Their event takes all of the amateur radio DYFI reports and plots them on a separate dashboard. They call this the [Amateur Radio Community Intensity Map \(ARCIM\)](#). Hams across the globe are invited and encouraged to participate. The difference is, we use Winlink instead of submitting reports on the USGS website. There is a form in the Winlink templates list specifically for USGS DYFI reports. Once you run your session and send the emailed form, it goes directly to the USGS just like

if you had used the website. If you CC *EARTHQUAKE* on your Winlink report, it will also appear on the LAXNORTHEAST ARCIM.

So why Winlink? Imagine a major quake like the San Francisco earthquake in 1989. Following a major event, the infrastructure will be damaged and traditional communications, including the internet, will likely not be functioning. That is where hams and Winlink step up to the plate and shine. We can utilize amateur radio to file reports, pass traffic, relay messages, etc when nothing else works. In fact, an amateur with a Winlink station could likely send in the DYFI report as fast or faster than a layperson using the web form. The two dots on the smaller image are exactly that. Both of those are DYFI reports filed by amateur operators using Winlink.

Luckily, the May quake in East Tennessee was a weak one, but it still jarred the community. We know to prepare for storms, flooding, fires and a host of other natural threats. Have you thought about earthquake preparedness? Take this as a grand opportunity to prepare for whatever may happen and have a plan. More information on earthquake preparedness is available on the Red Cross website and many other outlets. I invite you to participate in the [2025 Great Shakeout](#). Who knows, you may get a chance to use what you learned in that exercise to report a real world event.

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