

Another quake hits Bay Area

The Bay Area was hit with its third earthquake in four days yesterday morning, a mild one that did no damage but did wake residents of the East Bay.

The quake, which hit at 7:31 a.m., was measured at 3.3 on the Richter scale by seismologists at the University of California at Berkeley. The statewide Office of Emergency Services, 75 miles northeast of Sacramento, reported it at 3.9 on the scale.

The quake's epicenter was near Dublin.

Asked about the three quakes, which included a 4.5 temblor Wednesday morning along the Pacific Coast and a 2.7 tremor in Hayward Thursday morning, Berkeley research assistant Keith McLaughlin said, "We wouldn't define this as a sequence. As far as we can tell, they are unrelated. I'm not concerned. I'm not moving from the Bay Area at this moment."

Mike Browne, spokesman for the state Office of Emergency Services, said it is not unusual for measurements at the Berkeley seismology station, at Cal Tech in Pasadena and at the state Department of Water Resources (from which his 3.9 figure came) to differ by a few points.

"I would be more inclined to compromise (on the magnitude)," Browne said. "Our primary concern is not magnitude but damage it can cause. When it starts getting to 4.0 and 4.5, then we get concerned."

The only damage Wednesday's 4.5 quake caused, however, was some broken dishes, he said.

Although the difference between 3.3 and 3.9 does not seem like much, Browne said a 3.9 quake is 30 times more powerful. He said a 3.0 quake is equivalent to 400 pounds of TNT, while a 4.0 quake is equivalent to six tons of TNT.

