

Earthquake **Los Angeles**

practices for the 'Big One'

R P 11-2-89
LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Anticipating the "Big One," emergency agencies staged an earthquake drill yesterday in response to a mock 7.0 earthquake that killed and injured hundreds, collapsed buildings, buckled a highway and disrupted communications across Southern California.

Some 70 cities, including Los Angeles, took part in the simulation, coordinated by the county's Office of Emergency Management.

The 6 a.m. "quake" struck along the Newport-Inglewood fault and was centered in southern Los Angeles county, hitting hardest in the South Bay area, from Marina del Rey to Long Beach.

It sent emergency service personnel scrambling in a test of their ability to cope with a disaster that is expected to occur at anytime.

The drill mobilized county and city agencies as well as hospitals that would deal with the confusion, injuries and damage that would follow a massive quake.

A "great quake" measuring 8.0 or more on the Richter scale is anticipated to strike California sometime in the next 30 years, scientists say.

Officials yesterday, working from a scenario drawn out by the California Department of Conservation, projected injuries in the thousands and hundreds of deaths in a 7.0 temblor.

"The purpose of the exercise ... was to provide the opportunity (to) test the ability of emergency personnel to respond to their assigned posts and to test the ability of the county emergency operations center to gather and disseminate critical information to appropriate county departments and incorporated cities," sheriff's Deputy Gabe Ramirez said.

Bill Butler, the county's Emergency Welfare Services director, reported late yesterday morning that things were "going well."

"It is hectic, but we designed it that way," he said of the drill.