

# Powerful earthquake shakes Chile, no deaths reported

**Associated Press, 12-25-16**

SANTIAGO, Chile — A powerful earthquake shook southern Chile on Sunday, but there were no immediate reports of deaths and only minor known damage.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 7.6 quake struck at 11:22 a.m. local time (9:22 a.m. EST; 1422 GMT) near the southern tip of Chiloe Island, about 25 miles (39 kilometers) south-southwest of Puerto Quello and at a depth of 22 miles (35 kilometers). The area, some 800 miles (1,300 kilometers) south of the capital of Santiago, is relatively sparsely populated.

National emergency director Ricardo Toro told a news conference that some 4,000 people were evacuated for fear of a possible tsunami following the quake, but the alert was eased about 90 minutes after the temblor.

“There is no information of loss of life,” Toro said, though he said some highways were damaged. The local electric company reported that power was cut to about 22,000 customers.

Taxi driver Luis Ramirez told The Associated Press by telephone from the town of Ancud that he was washing his car when the quake hit. “I’m 48 years old and I’ve never felt anything so strong,” he said.

Ramirez said cars equipped with loudspeakers roamed the streets urging people to evacuate beach areas.

A much stronger magnitude 8.8 earthquake in February 2010 generated a tsunami and killed 524 people in Chile.

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