

Magnitude-4.4 quake shakes Southern Calif.

Early-morning temblor jolts people awake, puts first-responders on notice

AP Associated Press

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LOS ANGELES - An earthquake east of downtown Los Angeles rippled across Southern California's vast urban center before dawn Tuesday, jolting people awake and putting first-responders on alert.

There are no reports of damage, injuries or power outages linked to the temblor.

"All is calm in the city of Los Angeles," Los Angeles Fire Department Capt. Steve Ruda said.

But shortly after the quake, the California Highway Patrol reported a buckled 10-foot stretch of concrete in a center lane of southbound Interstate 5 south of downtown. It's unclear if the broken concrete was caused by the quake.

Crews from the California Department of Transportation were working through the morning commuter rush to repair the cracked concrete.

The magnitude-4.4 quake, centered about 10 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, struck shortly after 4 a.m., according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

"It was a shake, but not bad. Our inmates slept through it and we had a few calls, but not as many as you would think," Pico Rivera sheriff's station Sgt. Jacqueline Sanchez said.

Deputies were immediately dispatched to make "critical facility checks — bridges and dams, stuff like that," the sergeant said.

'The building started shaking'

Though the quake was considered small in size, it was felt over a large swath of Southern California.

People from San Bernardino County to the east and Santa Monica to the west reported feeling the quake.

"The building started shaking. That's it. I'm used to it," downtown security guard Ruben Solis, 25, said from his booth in the high-rise district. Solis said he checked his monitors and no alarms were triggered. "I got up and went on patrol."

But fellow security guard Nonie Bailey, 55, was on the fourth floor and headed quickly for the ground level.

"It shook real hard. I thought the building was coming down. I was on the fourth floor and I got down to the ground," Bailey said.

Los Angeles County Fire Department supervising dispatcher Andre Gougis said there are no reports of damage or injury and the department is at normal operations.

"All our battalions reported a Level 1, meaning they felt it but there was no damage," Gougis said. He said the quake was felt at his east Los Angeles headquarters.

"There was an initial jolt, then mild shaking after that," he said.

The quake hit not far from the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake, a magnitude 5.9 quake that killed eight people and caused more than \$350 million in damage.

The latest jolt is too small to inflict the same damage.

"I'm sure people would have felt it, but this is not an earthquake that will be damaging," said USGS geophysicist Amy Vaughan.

Tuesday's early morning jolt was probably not related to the Whittier Narrows quake because too much time has elapsed, said California Institute of Technology seismologist Kate Hutton.

Scientists have not yet determined which fault was responsible for the latest quake.

Hutton said there's a small chance that Tuesday's temblor is a precursor to a larger event, but the likelihood diminishes over time.

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