

# Alaska quake damage could have been worse

Stricter codes imposed after 1964 quake

By RACHEL D'ORO and MARK THIESSEN  
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE — The magnitude 7.0 earthquake that rattled Alaska's largest city cracked roads and collapsed highway ramps, but there were no reports of widespread catastrophic damage or collapsed buildings.

There's a good reason for that.

A devastating 1964 Alaska earthquake — the most powerful on record in the United States — led to stricter building codes that helped structures withstand the shifting earth Friday.

"Congratulations to the people of Alaska for being really prepared for this earthquake," U.S. Geological Survey Geophysicist Paul Caruso said. "Because a magnitude 7.0 in a city like that, you know, it could have been significantly worse."

Gov. Bill Walker said sometimes people, including himself, grouse about stringent building codes. But he's "really glad" they were in place as he only had minor water damage at his home.

"Building codes mean something," he said.

The quake was centered about 7 miles north of Anchorage, which has a population of about 300,000. People ran from their offices or took cover under desks. A 5.7 aftershock arrived within minutes, followed by a series of smaller quakes.

The two big back-to-back quakes knocked items off shelves, disrupted power, broke store windows and briefly triggered a tsunami warning for islands and coastal areas south of the city. Walker issued a disaster declaration, and President Donald Trump declared an emergency, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster relief.

There were no reports of deaths or serious injuries.

## Aftershocks

Still, aftershocks over the weekend continued to fray nerves, with people worrying about being caught in more massive shakers.

"They're disturbing, and I'm not putting anything away that could fall until they calm down," Randall Cavanaugh, an Anchorage attorney, said following a restless night at home. "I kept waking up."

By midmorning on Saturday, there had been about 550 aftershocks, including 11 with magnitudes of 4.5 or greater, Caruso said.

The aftershocks should be weaker and less frequent in the coming days, but officials can't say for sure when they'll stop, he said.

Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz said the extent of damage was "relatively small" considering the scale of Friday's earthquake. He also credited building codes for minimizing structure damage.

"In terms of a disaster, I think it says more about who we are than what we suffered," he said Saturday at a press briefing, adding that Anchorage was prepared for such an emergency.

"People pulled together. We followed the plans that were in place. We looked after one another. And when people around the country and around the world look at this, they're going to say, 'We want to do things in the Anchorage way because Anchorage did this right,'" Berkowitz said.

After the first earthquake, Alaska's largest hospital activated its incident command center, but the trickle of patients into the emergency room at Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage was more like a normal workday and not a mass casualty event. The injuries were described as minor, and there were no patients with life-threatening conditions.

"The flow of patients into the emergency department was similar to a typical Monday," hospital spokesman Mikal



AP Photo/Dan Joling

A car is trapped on a collapsed section of the offramp of Minnesota Drive in Anchorage on Friday after earthquakes.



AP Photo/Mark Thiessen

Damage is shown to the library at Chugiak High School in Chugiak, Alaska, following earthquakes on Friday.

**'People pulled together. We followed the plans that were in place. We looked after one another.'**

**Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz**

Canfield said. "It wasn't a situation where there was a mass rush of people."

## Road damage

Roads took the brunt of the damage, especially the scenic Glenn Highway, the closest thing Alaska has to an interstate and links the state's largest city to suburban communities to the north.

Traffic has been snarled since the quake. Delays came as drivers were diverted around road damage on temporary detours or the highway was reduced to one lane while crews try to reconstruct the roadway after the temblor caused sinkholes and buckled pavement.

Employees who live north of Anchorage are being encouraged to take today off or work from home if possible

to reduce traffic. Walker, who leaves office at noon, gave state workers in the Anchorage area the day off to help reduce the number of cars on the highway. Schools have been closed until Dec. 10, which should also reduce traffic.

Walker said he would not be traveling to the rural village of Noorvik for the swearing in of Gov.-elect Mike Dunleavy but instead would remain in Anchorage to keep working on recovery efforts.

Normal operations resumed at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport after flight operations were suspended Friday, Transportation Department spokesman Meadow Bailey told The Associated Press.

The 800-mile trans Alaska oil pipeline was shut down for hours while crews were sent to inspect it for damage.

The supply chain of food and other goods delivered to the Port of Anchorage from the Lower 48 has not been disrupted by the powerful earthquake that caused widespread damage to roads.

"The ships are coming in on schedule, the supply lines are at this point uninterrupted," Berkowitz said Sunday at a news conference.

Officials on Saturday encouraged Alaskans not to make a run on grocery stores, saying there was no reason to hoard food.

However, at least one grocery store Sunday morning had no milk and little to no bread, bottled water or bananas.

"Even when people were initially concerned, people who might have been reaching for the last item, looked over and saw someone else and said, 'Yes, we are sharing this with you,'" he said.

He also touted Alaskans' longstanding tradition to stock up for long winters.

"I would encourage people, once the ships get in, once things settle back down, make sure you have the emergency preparations, the emergency kits that you should have," he said.

## The 1964 quake

Alaska's 1964 earthquake, with a 9.2 magnitude, was centered about 75 miles east of Anchorage. It and the tsunami it triggered claimed about 130 lives.

The state averages 40,000 earthquakes a year, with more large quakes than the 49 other states combined. Southern Alaska has a high risk of earth-

## Emergency alert test canceled

The Daily Astorian

A countywide emergency alert test was canceled Friday after a major earthquake in Alaska.

The test, administered by Clatsop County Emergency Management, was scheduled to take place at noon, sending messages to residential and business landlines, cellphones and email addresses.

But an earthquake measuring 7.0 struck north of Anchorage that morning, prompting concerns of a possible tsunami.

A tsunami warning was not issued for the Oregon Coast, but officials did not want to create confusion, Emergency Services Manager Tiffany Brown said.

The test will be rescheduled for December. While landlines are automatically included in the test, cellphones and email addresses must be registered on the county website.

quakes because the Earth's plates slide past each other under the region, but it is rare for major quakes to strike so close heavily populated areas.

Associated Press writers Becky Bohrer in Juneau, Alaska; Dan Joling in Anchorage; Gillian Flaccus in Portland; Gene Johnson in Seattle; Jennifer Kelleher; Audrey McAvoy and Caleb Jones in Honolulu; Rachel La Corte in Olympia; and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

**STUFF THE TRUCK!**

**Food Drive**

Now Through Dec 31st

**Bring in 10 Cans of Food**

**Get 10% off**

on all furniture & mattresses

**Hours:**  
M-F: 8-6pm  
SAT: 9-5pm  
SUN: 10-4pm

**Appliance & Home Furnishings**  
"We Service What We Sell"

VISA MasterCard

**503-861-0929**  
529 SE MARLIN AVE • WARRENTON • OR

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: John Anderson • 360-269-2500

Christy Shoop  
Paperwork

Divorce need not be expensive. We help you get the paperwork right and provide mediation to help you divide your assets.

Brian G. Kulhanjian  
Mediation

**OREGON LEGAL RESOLUTION SERVICES**

552 Commercial Street Astoria (503) 325-9115

A division of Stahancyk, Kent & Hook