

## Nationwide earthquake drills set

In the wake of the recent major earthquakes around the world, the Office of Civil Defense hopes more Filipinos would join the nationwide simultaneous earthquake drills on Thursday.

OCD spokesperson Romina Marasigan said the deadly tremors that rocked Japan, Ecuador, Myanmar and other countries should be a reminder for everyone to be prepared all the time.

We've seen the devastation of these earthquakes. It's high time we prepared. We enjoin everybody to participate in the earthquake drills on April 21, she said.

This will be the first quarterly earthquake drill for 2016 to be overseen by the OCD and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

Earthquake drills will be held all over the country on that day at 8:30 A.M. with command and control operations based at Air Force City at Clark, Pampanga.

While temblors of magnitude-5 and under have struck places around the Philippines in recent weeks, officials are more concerned about the West Valley Fault which runs through the cities of Marikina, Pasig and Muntinlupa in Metro Manila and is capable of generating severe shaking of magnitude-7 or higher.

The fault has not moved significantly in the last 400 years and is due for some movement, experts have repeatedly warned.

Marasigan said that should a strong earthquake hit, responding agencies and even the NDRRMC might also be victims, thus the need for an alternative operations center.

It's better that we have an alternative venue in case Metro Manila is too damaged, and we saw Air Force City at Clark as an alternative operations center. This is why the command and control for this drill will be outside Metro Manila, she said.

The OCD also urged Filipinos to capitalize on their social media skills as they take part in the drills.

The agency will be using hashtag #pagyanigchallenge to encourage netizens to post selfies, photographs and videos as they duck, cover and hold during the drills.

You can take photos of yourself so you can show your preparedness and cooperation in this endeavor, Marasigan said.