



► **TRAVEL RISK INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (TRIS)**

First alert issued to TRIS subscribers on Saturday morning.

Chile: Strong earthquake strikes near Concepcion
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A strong 8.5 magnitude earthquake is reported to have struck near Concepcion early today at 3.34am local time at a depth of 34 miles. A tsunami warning is in effect for Chile and Peru and a tsunami watch has been activated for Ecuador.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE : Travel Alert
Issued 01/03/2010

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the situation in Chile in the aftermath of a powerful earthquake, measuring 8.8 magnitude, that struck 73 miles north of Concepcion (Chile's second largest city; pop. 650,000) and 197 miles south of Santiago. The Department of State strongly urges U.S. citizens to avoid tourism and non-essential travel to Chile.

FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE: Travel Advice
Updated 02/03/2010

There have been frequent and sometimes heavy aftershocks, including one measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale. Travel within Chile is restricted due to damage to the infrastructure, particularly south of Santiago. Some roads, including the Pan-American Highway, have been partially blocked. There is widespread looting and violence in Concepcion where there is currently a military presence in place to restore order. The cities of Concepcion, Talca and Santiago have been the heaviest affected. The Chilean government has designated the regions of Biobio and Maule as "states of catastrophe". A curfew will be in force in these two regions from 00:00-08:00 until further notice.

► **CONSEQUENCES**

The earthquake caused significant damage to the areas closest to the epicentre, including the cities of Concepcion, Talcahuano and Temuco. Santiago, Vina del Mar and Valparaiso were also affected by power outages and limited telecommunications.

Santiago is five hours north of the earthquake disaster zone, and it experienced relatively minor damage compared to the areas in and around Concepcion.

Power was restored within five hours of the earthquake in the main business and tourist district, telecommunications were restored soon after. Supermarkets, petrol stations, restaurants and shopping centres began to open yesterday and all Metro lines are now running.

► **CURRENT STATUS**

Santiago International Airport has been closed to all but military operations since the earthquake.

Travellers who plan to depart Chile by air are advised to stay in place and wait for the return of international flights.

In a meeting of the Chilean civil aviation authority (DJAC) on March 1, the authorities announced a two-phase restoration of airline service.

During Phase One (March 3 – 5), domestic flights will arrive and depart from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM through temporary facilities at the airport.

International flights will arrive and depart from 8:00 PM to 8:00 AM. All international arrivals during Phase One will transit via another Chilean airport to clear immigration and customs before arriving in Santiago.

According to the DJAC plan, Phase Two will begin March 6 when the airport will return to round the clock operations, still operating through temporary facilities at the airport, but without the need for international arrivals to transit another Chilean airport before departing the country.

The Chilean government's response to the situation has been efficient and well coordinated, with unlimited resources dedicated to the effort.



Chile, with a history of many strong earthquakes, has very strict building codes and Santiago, a city of 6 million, had only one building and one bridge collapse. One museum and one church also suffered superficial damage. Many older buildings and homes, which did not comply with the newer building codes in the poorer parts of the city, were also damaged.

► **THE FUTURE**

Following an earthquake of this magnitude, strong aftershocks are likely for weeks. There is an inherent risk from previously damaged or weakened infrastructure should an aftershock occur.