

CALIFORNIA EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE PLAN

7743

(No. 9 November 1993)

The Earthquake Response Plan was prepared in compliance with the California Emergency Plan, which identifies earthquakes as one of the peacetime emergencies for which contingency plans are required.

The plan documents for public officials the magnitude and nature of the potential problems they might be confronted with and the type of response that would be needed following a major earthquake. It contains specialized operational concepts and emergency actions, with specific application to the unique aspects of a large and devastating earthquake.

Special consideration was given to use of the organizational and operational concepts outlined in the widely accepted and utilized California Fire and Rescue Emergency Plan and the California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan. These concepts require the designation of coordinators for various functions such as disaster medical care, fire and rescue, transportation, engineering, law enforcement, and housing at each level of the emergency organization: local, city, county, operational area, mutual aid region, and state. This approach requires jurisdictional or service plans wherein individuals are charged specifically with the responsibility of dividing or managing response efforts or resources.

CAL FIRE is assigned the following special support tasks in the response plan:

- Fire and rescue.
- Law enforcement and traffic control.
- Emergency welfare.
- Resources and support.

EARTHQUAKE DISASTER LEVEL

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For planning purposes, the OES has established three levels of disaster:

Level I is an event wherein local resources are available and adequate; a local emergency may or may not be declared.

For Level II disasters, mutual aid will be required on a regional or even statewide basis. A state of emergency may be proclaimed, and a presidential declaration may be requested.

A Level III disaster will require massive amounts of resources from all levels of government as well as from the private sector. The California earthquake response plans for the southern San Andreas fault and the San Francisco bay area are designed to address a Level III disaster.

Although a particular earthquake might be a Level III disaster when discussed on a regional basis, conditions will vary greatly from one specific location to another. Indeed, even within a jurisdiction, the extent of disaster will vary from one function to another; for example, a destroyed hospital may put a city in "Level III" medically, while still having adequate law enforcement personnel ("Level I"). It is important that emergency response personnel keep this potential for varying levels in mind during relief operations.

FEDERAL PLAN FOR EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE AND ASSISTANCE

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has responsibility for the federal role and organization based on tasking the federal agencies and using their supporting plans and checklists for responding promptly and effectively to PL 93-288 emergency disaster relief missions. FEMA makes assignments after the occurrence of an earthquake of such magnitude and severity that a presidential declaration of a major disaster is issued.

PL 93-288 assistance will be supportive of and not a substitute for state and local government aid, assistance, and emergency services.

FEMA developed a federal plan for earthquake response and assistance (FEMA Region IX) in May 1983. It explains that the use of alternate regional offices may be necessary and that lines of succession may be required to establish organization continuity. FEMA has tasked the U.S. Forest Service with specific roles in the following areas:

- Firefighting.
- Communications (in support of federal emergency communications coordinator).
- Emergency roads, airfields, highways in support of Department of the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Search and rescue (support of Sixth Army).
- Mass care and shelter (support of American Red Cross).
- Damage reconnaissance (support of Sixth Army).

CAL FIRE PREPAREDNESS

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Department personnel must consider the requirements of a response system wherein timely, effective, and coordinated emergency actions will be taken. Such a system, developed to meet local need, may be based upon the following.

Employee preparedness, safety, and basic survival needs:

- Development of employee preparedness programs.
- Maintenance of emergency supplies and equipment.
- Assistance for individuals who are disabled or injured.
- Designation of temporary emergency shelters and sanitary facilities.
- Attention to family needs.
- Food, potable water, and sanitary facilities.

Liaison with outside agencies:

- Networking with city, county, state, federal agencies, and other emergency services organizations.

Emergency operating procedures:

- Prearranged assignments of personnel for emergency responsibilities.
- Security and recovery procedures.
- Travel restrictions to station or assignment.
- Damage assessment.
- Contact with supervisor.
- Assistance to walk-ins.
- Mutual aid.

- Preparation for aftershocks.
- Independent operation.
- Incident command.
- Implementation of special staffing pattern.

Emergency financial procedures:

- Continuance of fiscal activities with evaluation of available funds.
- Management of cash flow and cash reserve.

Data processing:

- Procedures for system shutdown and recovery.
- Designation of backup facilities and equipment.

Vital records:

- Identification and protection of records vital to the resumption of business.
- Procedures for emergency storage, security, and retrieval of records.

Communications:

- Plans for an emergency operations center and backup systems.
- Procedures for communications within the organization and with employees and family members outside.
- Emergency generator.
- Damage assessment.
- Coordination with local OES, region, and other agencies.
- Establishment of dispatch capabilities at another level, if necessary.
- Resource status keeping.

- Assistance from telephone company; other related services.
- Security of facilities and equipment.
- Mobile radios and batteries.

Transportation:

- Evacuation of equipment to safe location.
- Alternative fuel sources.
- Emergency generator for fuel source.
- Alternative use of equipment.
- External requests for CAL FIRE equipment.
- Equipment repair.

Ongoing training, testing, and maintenance:

- Use of manuals, personnel education, pamphlets, and drills.
- Participation with other agencies.

TARGET HAZARDS

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Department employees shall consider the preservation of life as a priority over other values.

The normal response area for either wildland or structural companies could, quite conceivably, alter drastically following an earthquake. Preparation of local agency contingency plans can further define response criteria, and field units are encouraged to participate in such local efforts.

Targeted occupancies can be included in unit preparedness planning through use of the format suggested in CAL FIRE Handbook 1191 Structure Fire Training Course.

Engine companies may find greater usefulness assisting other jurisdictions.

[\(see next section\)](#)

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(see Forms or Forms Samples)