

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Seismic Safety Policy

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Purpose

To establish a general policy which demonstrates the Board of Supervisors' concern for seismic safety in San Diego County and which establishes a framework under which specific seismic issues can be addressed.

Background

The San Diego region has been considered an area of low seismic risk with a "low" probability of a major earthquake. Seismic events, however, have occurred which increased the concern over the possibility of a locally damaging earthquake. The region includes several active fault zones, and there is no accurate way to predict when a major earthquake is likely to occur. Therefore, the Board has, over the years, taken various actions designed to improve seismic safety and to provide close coordination of those actions. Some of the actions taken by the Board include the addition of the Seismic Safety Element to the General Plan in 1975, adoption of a legislative policy concerning seismic safety in 1977 (Board Policy M-9) and adoption of the first County Earthquake Preparedness Plan in California in 1981. It is the intent of this policy to bring together these and other efforts into a coordinated approach to seismic safety.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. There shall be a comprehensive and coordinated approach to seismic safety efforts in the County of San Diego and the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Safety Group shall be responsible for coordinating seismic safety efforts.
2. Seismic safety is a regional issue which requires coordination and cooperation between other governmental organizations including:
 - Local jurisdictions, individually and collectively, through the Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization
 - State and Federal emergency agencies
 - Mexican emergency agencies

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3. Seismic safety activities shall, to the extent possible, reflect partnerships between the public and private sectors, the media, the military, non-profit volunteer agencies and others.

4. Means of achieving seismic safety shall include disaster mitigation efforts and disaster planning and preparedness efforts.

A. Disaster mitigation efforts are designed to reduce the effects of a damaging earthquake before the event and include such elements as:

- (1) Incorporation of land use policies, which are designed to insure seismic safety, in the San Diego County General Plan. Such policies shall regularly be reviewed and updated in order to remain consistent with seismic and geologic knowledge and with changing legislation.
- (2) Rigid enforcement of existing building regulations and codes which reflect the highest level of seismic safety.
- (3) Development of hazard reduction programs which incorporate the identification, abatement and/or stabilization of existing hazardous structures.
- (4) Increased scientific investigation of local seismic hazards to help reduce uncertainties and to provide information for making informed decisions concerning public safety.
- (5) Adoption of a legislative Board Policy (M-9 Seismic Safety) which will enhance timely input to seismic legislation.

B. Disaster planning and preparedness efforts are designed to improve the ability of government and the public to respond to emergencies and include such elements as:

- (1) Earthquake response planning which shall be incorporated into the County's Operational Area Emergency Plan shall be exercised on a regular basis.
- (2) Public information and education, to increase awareness of seismic risks and personal preparedness activities, shall be a continuing effort.
- (3) Warning systems designed to transmit emergency information to the general public and response agencies shall be developed, maintained and upgraded.
- (4) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for responding to earthquakes and other emergency situations shall be developed and maintained by County departments.
- (5) An operational area Emergency Operations Center (EOC) shall be maintained for coordination of multi-jurisdictional emergencies and training exercises.

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- (6) Common data bases to enhance computer information capabilities for coordinating emergencies, shall be encouraged.
- (7) Legislation which seeks preparedness projects that promote regional and binational earthquake planning and preparedness, shall be sought.
- (8) Coordination with local business and industry responsible for community lifelines, shall be improved.
- (9) Employee, home and family preparedness efforts designed to improve employees' ability to function effectively during an earthquake or other emergency, shall be pursued.
- (10) School preparedness efforts, which will enhance earthquake safety in schools, shall be pursued.
- (11) Recovery plans which will reduce disaster recovery time, will be developed.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-2019.

Board Action

10-15-85 (10)
12-13-88 (73)
11-29-94 (40)
03-14-06 (11)
12-09-08 (33)
12-04-12 (3)

CAO Reference

- 1. Office of Emergency Services
- 2. Planning and Development Services
- 3. Department of Environmental Health