

ESP

BULLETIN

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SPECIAL NEEDS

Many neighborhoods in California are composed of populations that are diverse ethnically, culturally and in age.

In order to ensure your neighborhood's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from earthquakes and other disasters, your neighborhood response team must be aware of and be sensitive to such differences.

For example, as your neighborhood preparedness and response plan is developed, the needs of seniors and those with hearing, mobility, speech, visual and other impairments should be considered and included. The needs of children and persons who are not fluent in English also should be determined and included.

This bulletin is designed to assist you in that effort.

FORMING A BRANCH

Your planning committee should identify members of a special needs branch and a coordinator to oversee the efforts of the branch in assisting neighbors with special needs.

The planning committee should review the questionnaires completed by neighbors who attended the organizing meeting. Possible coordinators include persons who have good administrative and leadership skills.

Other attributes the planning committee should consider in select-



**Can't
Do It
Alone!
1997**

**Monthly Preparedness
Items and Actions**

January

Understand the Threat

February

Meet with Your Neighbors

March

Inventory Community Resources

April

Develop Response Teams

May

Get Trained

June

Update Emergency Supplies

July

*Reduce Neighborhood
Hazards*

August

Learn Search and Rescue

September

Review First Aid Skills

October

Assess the Damage

November

Plan for Emergency Housing

December

Plan Your Drill

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ing a coordinator and members of the special needs branch are:

- Experience working with special needs populations;
- Compassion and sensitivity;
- Fluency in sign and/or other languages.

PRE-QUAKE ACTIVITIES

The special needs branch should start preparing for future earthquakes by developing a plan to assist those with special needs. The branch should review the surveys completed by neighbors and canvass the neighborhood to:

- Identify persons who might need assistance;
- List persons with hearing, mobility, speech or other impairments;
- Determine residents who are not fluent in English and provide them with preparedness information in their respective languages;
- Work with your local chapter of the American Red Cross to ensure that potential sheltering sites can serve persons with special needs;
- Locate other facilities that can provide shelter for and assist persons with special needs.
- Work with the hazard reduction branch to assess, eliminate and mitigate hazards in the homes of those with special needs;

- Determine which residents need special emergency supplies and equipment, including:
 - Medications;
 - Special foods;
 - Hearing aids;
 - Oxygen;
 - Wheelchairs;
 - Canes or walkers;
 - Monitors;
 - Other items.
- Assist residents in assembling emergency kits;
- Identify businesses, including pharmacies, that can replace damaged or lost equipment, medications and other items.

POST-QUAKE ACTIVITIES

After the earthquake, the special needs branch should:

- Account for everyone with a special need (the list of individuals with special needs developed before the quake should be used to ensure that the conditions and locations of everyone have been determined);
- Advise the first aid branch regarding the injuries and conditions of those with special needs.
- Provide the light search and rescue unit with the locations of trapped individuals;
- Advise those with hearing or visual impairments about the emergency and what is being done by the neighborhood response team;
- Ensure that residents who are not fluent in English are informed about the emergency, what is being done, what they should do and whether or not they should evacuate;
- Assist persons who are deprived of life support systems due to disruption of electrical power;

- Help persons who are without medications;
- Provide information about the opening and locations of shelters to persons with special needs;
- Assist persons with special needs in evacuation if such action is necessary;
- Contact friends or relatives regarding their locations and conditions.

RESOURCES

Additional resources on earthquake preparedness for persons with special needs, including seniors and those with hearing, mobility, visual and other impairments, are available through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, your local Office of Emergency Services or your local chapter of the American Red Cross.

This document was adapted from the OES publication "Organizing Neighborhoods for Earthquake Preparedness."

The ESP Focus and Bulletins are only suggestions for preparing your neighborhood. You need to use discretion and common sense in your relationships with neighbors.



WHAT IS ESP ?

ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase earthquake preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services and representatives from Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties assist in the development of campaign materials and in coordination of the campaign.

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