

# ESP

# BULLETIN

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## CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

The ability to communicate information about an event, its impacts, what is being done and what must be done is essential after earthquakes and other emergencies.

Recent disasters have shown that telephone and other communications systems might not be available when needed due to damaged telephone lines and buildings as well as equipment malfunctions.

Non-emergency calls by residents within the impacted area worsen the situation.

Damage to the phone system or overloading in a future earthquake might make it difficult for affected persons in your neighborhood to obtain assistance.

Your neighborhood response team should include in its plan a communications branch and related equipment.

## SELECT A COORDINATOR AND BRANCH TEAM MEMBERS

The planning committee, block captain and personnel branch should review the questionnaires completed by residents to identify members of the communications branch.

Because of their training and the likely effectiveness of their equipment, licensed amateur radio



**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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operators are best-suited to comprise the communications branch.

If no one in your neighborhood has such skills, contact your local amateur radio coordinator or office of emergency services for information on training.

## PRE-QUAKE ACTIVITIES

Once your communications coordinator and branch have been identified, preparations for future emergencies should begin. The communications branch should:

- Identify a communications center; the communications center can be located at the command center, designated shelter or another location;
- Ensure that battery-powered radios and televisions are available for monitoring newscasts;
- Identify local radio stations that are part of the Emergency Alert System;
- Review the surveys completed by neighbors to ensure that each has an out-of town contact (it's much easier to call outside the area);
- Remind neighbors to use their phones only in an emergency;
- Be aware that road conditions can make travel by car impossible;
- Consider other methods of sending messages, including:
  - bicycle;
  - motorcycle;
  - horseback.

**Remember:** Plan for the worst, hope for the best!

## POST-QUAKE ACTIVITIES

After an earthquake, the communications branch should:

- Report to the designated site;
- Use citizens' band (CB) and ham radios, as needed, to communicate information to emergency agencies;
- Monitor radio and television reports regarding emergency instructions, damage to hospitals, roads and lifelines, the opening of shelters and other information;
- Post and update situation reports at designated sites;
- Use ham or CB radios to help residents reach out-of-town contacts if phone service is disrupted.

## COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

The information neighborhood response teams provide and how they provide it to local officials and residents of the neighborhood is important. Concise, detailed and accurate data will help emergency agencies assess the impact of the emergency in your area.

Designate a community liaison to coordinate the transfer of information to local officials and neighbors. Key information the community liaison should provide to local officials includes:

- Number of people injured
  - seriously
  - moderately
  - slightly
- Number of people missing
  - probable locations
- Number of fires
  - addresses
- Number of buildings damaged, locations and severity
  - habitable/damaged;
  - uninhabitable;
  - destroyed.

- Broken utility lines
  - type;
  - number of each.

Communicating key safety and response information to neighbors can save lives, reduce injuries, save property and help maintain morale. Key information to provide neighbors includes:

- Safety actions such as removing items from high shelves, checking water and food supplies, anticipating aftershocks, etc.;
- Priorities and activities being conducted by neighborhood response teams.

*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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