

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**  
**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**



**SUBJECT:** POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR EARTHQUAKE  
PREDICTIONS

**POLICY NO. 980**

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**PURPOSE::** This policy statement provides guidance and direction to Department of Health Services (DHS) managers on the minimum prudent readiness actions that must be taken in response to a State Office of Emergency Services (OES) issued Short- Term Earthquake Prediction, or Earthquake Advisory within the Los Angeles County area.

**DEFINITION::** **A. EARTHQUAKE PREDICTIONS**  
For operational purposes, a scientifically-based earthquake prediction includes the expected time, place, magnitude, and probability of occurrence. Time frames are as follows:

(1) "Long-term prediction" signifies a prediction of an earthquake that is expected to occur within a period of a few weeks to a few years.

(2) "Short-term prediction" signifies a prediction of an earthquake that is expected to occur within a few hours to a few weeks. If the probability of occurrence is considered high, a short-term prediction can be further defined as leading to:

(a) "Alert": 3 days to a few weeks,

(b) "Imminent Alert": up to three days.

**B. EARTHQUAKE ADVISORIES**

Earthquake Advisories are statements by OES regarding scientific assessments that, within a specified period (usually 3-5 days), there is an enhanced likelihood for damaging earthquakes to occur in areas designated in the Advisory.

They are issued:

(1) following earthquakes in which there is concern about subsequent damaging earthquakes, and

(2) only after OES has received notification from the scientific community of special concern regarding an evolving sequence and where, in OES' judgment, there are significant public safety considerations. The basis of the advisories is existing knowledge of the seismic history and potential of the area under consideration.

**POLICY::** Upon receipt of an OES earthquake prediction or advisory from the County Office of Emergency Management, the DHS Emergency Manager, or designee, will immediately notify the DHS Executive Chain of Command with instructions to implement the following readiness actions department-wide:

1. DHS managers and supervisors shall immediately review building and department emergency plans with all staff. Update all

home phone numbers and alternate reporting locations.

2. Evaluate staffing and scheduling needs and take appropriate action. Place key emergency response personnel on indefinite standby with predesignated assignments.
3. DHS Building Emergency Coordinators (SEC's) shall walk through buildings and take prompt action to correct visible nonstructural hazards.
4. BEC's shall check: 1) first aid kits for completeness, 2) working condition of fire extinguishers, 3) flashlights and batteries, 4) emergency food and water supplies, etc.
5. Review deployment of emergency response equipment (e.g. flashlights, radios, batteries, etc.) in conjunction with staffing needs.
6. Order tests of all emergency communications, including the HEAR and READINET systems.
7. Ensure that all computer equipment has been secured.
8. Ensure that all vital records are protected.
9. Ensure that all County vehicle gas tanks are kept full.
10. Expedite readiness of automotive equipment. Give priority to emergency response vehicles.
11. Review mutual aid agreements and discuss readiness posture with conjoined departments/agencies.
12. Review earthquake safety tips with all employees.
13. Implement additional instructions, as directed, by the OEM and/or the Emergency Medical Services Agency.

**AUTHORITY::** Office of Emergency Management, Chief Administrative Office, County of Los Angeles

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**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Jun 01, 1993

**SUPERCEDES:**

**APPROVED:** Signature on File

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