

## ESP

## BULLETIN

SUMMER 1996, VOL. VIII, ISSUE 3

**HELPING NEIGHBORS WITH 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, you need to be aware of and sensitive to such differences.

For example, as you develop your neighborhood preparedness and response plan, you should consider the needs of seniors and those with hearing, mobility, speech, visual and other impairments. You also should consider the needs of children and persons who are not fluent in English.

This bulletin is designed to assist you in that effort.

**SELECTING A TEAM**

Your planning committee should identify a leader and team to assist neighbors with special needs.

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

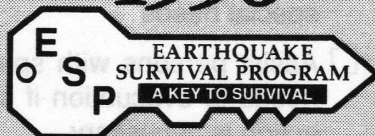
Other attributes the planning committee should consider in selecting a coordinator and team are:

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

**PRE-QUAKE ACTIVITIES**

The coordinator and team should start preparing for future earthquakes by involving those with special needs and by developing plans that will assist them. The team should review the surveys 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 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 identification unit to assess, eliminate and mitigate hazards in the homes of those with special needs

**Reducing the Risk in 1996****Monthly Preparedness Items and Actions****January***Understanding the Threat***February***Start It Up***March***Neighborhood Hazard Reduction***April***Community Resources***May***Neighborhood Emergency Supplies***June***Neighborhood Response Teams***July***Skills Training***August***Emergency Shelter***September***Assessing the Damage***October***Search and Rescue***November***Creative First Aid***December***Plan Your Drill*

Published by the  
Governor's Office of Emergency Services



- 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, members of your special needs team will have several duties. They 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 each person's location and condition has been determined)
- Advise the first aid team regarding the injuries and conditions of those with special needs
- Provide the light search and rescue team 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 location and condition

### 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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