



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

EXECUTIVE OFFICES  
60 HUDSON STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013

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OPERATIONS  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE NOTICE # 4/91

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TO: Distribution

FROM: Stewart D. O'Brien

DATE: January 25, 1991 1/31/91 SDU

SUBJECT: Earthquake (Natural Disasters) Contingency Action Plan - General Guidelines

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Purpose:

To establish general guidelines for the Department of Buildings response in the event of an earthquake or other natural disaster. The Department is responsible for determining the structural stability of buildings throughout the City. These procedures are to alert, coordinate and direct Department of Buildings personnel as required and are complementary to those established by the Mayor's Emergency Control Board for the inter-agency City wide earthquake contingency plan.

Specifics:

Determination of Emergency:

The Commissioner (or designee if the Commissioner cannot be reached) will determine that an emergency situation exists. Upon such determination, the Executive Chief Inspector (or designee) will establish a command post, and then recall and deploy the inspectorial staff as necessary, as described below.

ESTABLISHING A COMMAND POST AND RECALLING STAFF

Work Hours:

The Executive Chief Inspector will establish a command post (60 Hudson Street, 14th floor) and contact the Administrative Chief(s) in the affected borough(s). If they are in the field, inspectors will be contacted by beeper and called in to the borough office(s) to receive instructions. In the event that phone communication is unavailable, but the earthquake or natural disaster condition is apparent, inspectors are to return to their borough office(s). If the inspectors cannot return to their office(s), they should report to the nearest borough office or to the command post at 60 Hudson Street, whichever is closest. Communication among the boroughs will be maintained via the agency's walkie-talkies.

After Hours, and Weekends:

The Executive Chief Inspector will establish a command post (60 Hudson Street, 14th floor or any available borough facility) as directed by the Commissioner, depending on the area(s) suffering damage, traffic conditions, etc.

The Executive Chief Inspector will contact any necessary support staff, and the appropriate Administrative Chief Inspector(s), who will be responsible for contacting the inspectorial staff. The Administrative Chiefs must have the home telephone numbers (and beeper numbers) of their inspectorial staffs readily available at all times.

If telephone communication is unavailable, but the earthquake or natural disaster condition is apparent, inspectors are to report to their borough office. If that is impossible due to blocked roadways, traffic, etc, inspectors are to report to the nearest borough office or the Department's command post to receive instructions. Communication among the borough offices will be maintained via the agency's walkie-talkies.

Deployment

The Commissioner and the Executive Chief Inspector will determine the boroughs or areas that require deployment of inspectorial staff. The Executive Chief will mobilize personnel accordingly.

Inspectors will be assigned areas for stability checks. Working with registered architects and professional engineers, the inspectors will conduct building by building evaluations. The Executive Chief and Administrative Chief(s) will coordinate

the pairing of inspectors with the architects and engineers. (In addition to the Department's staff, the Executive Chief's office will maintain a list of volunteers with engineering/architectural qualifications who may be called upon as necessary.) Inspectors will be performing inspections in conjunction with the the activities of the Police Department, Fire Department and all other emergency services agencies.

Upon inspection, buildings will be designated as:

- 1) Inspected - No restriction on use or occupancy
- 2) Limited Entry - Only authorized personnel may enter
- 3) Unsafe - No entry or occupancy

Vacate procedures will commence for Buildings in categories two and three. In the interim, adhesive-backed signs with the aforementioned designations will be available to the inspectors (at the borough office(s) or agency command post) and must be posted prominently near the main entrance of each building.

Buildings with limited entry or unsafe designations must have signs posted at any secondary entrances/exits. Inspectors must notify the police if a building is unsafe, and the area must be barricaded to protect the public.

When an inspector has completed evaluating the buildings in his or her survey area, he or she must contact the borough office or command station from which he or she was deployed for any additional information or instructions (unless he or she received contingency instructions prior to going into the field).