

## BERKELEY'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

### CONCLUSION

Throughout this report we have discussed the various responses to a seismic emergency in the city of Berkeley. Berkeley appears to be prepared for such an emergency, and it has documented plans for the various response units. These emergency response units have also held disaster drills in preparation for an actual emergency. But even though plans do exist, and drills are held, we have found flaws with Berkeley's emergency response. In evaluating the various services, each of us feels that the response units will be understaffed and over-taxed in a seismic disaster. Mutual aid services were also questionable in terms of responding to a seismic disaster. It is not definite how and when mutual aid will arrive from the Office of Emergency Services.

There is no doubt that the rescue service will be overwhelmed. According to our research, the city does not have enough equipment and will have to request mutual aid from regional and state services. It will be very important that the aid is received as soon as possible, since the rescue and transportation of injured persons depend on it.

Understaffing is the main problem in regards to fire fighting. Berkeley's theoretical plans and reports show that in the event of a fire, the department should be able to handle the situation. However, because of the limited manpower, and also the lack of necessary equipment and facilities, the fire department may be unable to respond adequately to the many fires that may erupt around the city due to the earthquake. There is also the problem of communication if telephone and fire box services are out. Therefore, many fires may not be reported to the department.

The medical services that will be available immediately after the disaster, according to the Berkeley Emergency Operations Plan, includes 21 emergency aid stations and three hospitals. The question of manpower is of primary concern. The plans are well documented, but facilities may be understaffed in relation to the number of casualties. Since mutual aid will probably have to be called in, it is important to note the vagueness of the state mutual aid plan. It should also be noted that the time involved is very questionable, and it is not definite how long it will actually take to get help. A recommendation that is proposed for the city is to have the locations of the medical aid stations publicized so that people will know where to go for aid.

Food and shelter will not be as urgent a problem within the first 24 hours as the other emergency services. Berkeley's plan has designated areas to be set up for food and shelter allocations with the American Red Cross as the coordinating agency. This part of the Emergency Response seems to be well under control.

Law enforcement's primary responsibility will be to maintain law and order. Establishing evacuation routes, damage reports, search and rescue, and keeping communications in operation are also their concerns. From our research, we have found that the police departments have more obligations than their staffing may permit them to fulfill. They may definitely be understaffed in an emergency situation, and may have to call for mutual aid. In the city of Berkeley, it seems as if search and rescue would also be a crucial responsibility for the police. The University Police Department, being independent from the city department, has a well-planned response and trained staff to aid the problem. The only concern we have is the amount of obligations they must fulfill under the campus disaster plan. If they are understaffed, mutual aid will have to be called, but it will take several hours.

This evaluation concludes our study of Berkeley's Emergency Response. It is obvious from our study that well documented plans do exist for the various service agencies involved, but it is questionable how many people outside of the coordinating person's office know about them. It seems as if only the service chiefs involved in the plan have these reports. The staff which the plans designate know nothing or have limited information regarding their duties. What will happen if any of the service chiefs are unable to respond and coordinate their agencies? It is unlikely that someone will read through a two-inch-thick plan to see what he is supposed to do. We feel that it is necessary for these documents to be made available to the public as well as to the involved staff. Public knowledge of the format of the report may be a preventative measure to avoid wasted time and effort in the smooth flow of the plan. In an emergency situation, wasted time and effort will probably cost lives and result in injury to persons and property.