

TO: OPERATIONAL AREA COORDINATORS

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SUBJECT: DUCK, COVER AND HOLD PROCEDURE

Recently, you may have received information via email and other sources promoting a protective measure called the "triangle of life" and questioning the "duck, cover and hold" procedure recommended for use during earthquakes here in California and in other areas of the United States.

Because buildings constructed in California are built to much stricter codes and standards than those in the rest of the United States and those in other countries, including Mexico, Iran and Turkey, collapses here are very rare.

Extensive research into the causes of earthquake injuries and deaths supports the use of the Duck Cover and Hold procedure recommended by OES, the California Seismic Safety Commission and the American Red Cross.

Most injuries in California earthquakes occur when building occupants attempt to exit buildings or move to a different location in the building. In the recent San Simeon earthquake, two people were crushed by falling debris when they exited the building. Studies of the 1979 El Centro, 1987 Whittier, 1989 Loma Prieta and 1994 Northridge earthquakes confirm this pattern of injuries, and that use of the Duck Cover and Hold procedure reduces the likelihood of serious injury from a collapsed building and falling objects.

After each disaster, OES attempts to learn from behavioral research and other studies, and apply lessons learned into safety action recommendations.

There is, of course, no guarantee that people will not be injured in an earthquake. Earthquakes can shake buildings violently and cause extensive damage. The key to injury prevention is making sure buildings are safe, contents are secured, and occupants are trained to duck cover and hold.

Please share this information with jurisdictions and special districts within your operational area. Feel free to contact one of us if you have any questions or need additional information.