



The QuakeSmart Program

Raising Earthquake Mitigation Awareness in the Business Community



The QuakeSmart program is designed to encourage business leaders and owners in areas of the U. S. that are at risk from earthquakes to take actions that will mitigate damage to their businesses, provide greater safety for customers and employees, and speed recovery in the event of an earthquake.

Background

Congress established the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) with the passage of Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act in 1977. NEHRP brings together four agencies: FEMA, the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). NEHRP was established “to reduce the risks of life and property from future earthquakes in the United States through the establishment and maintenance of an effective earthquake hazards reduction program.”

A key objective in the 2009 NEHRP Strategic plan is to “**Increase public awareness of earthquake hazards and risk.**” To meet this objective, FEMA supports and conducts training and public awareness programs on various mitigation topics throughout the U.S. In 2008, FEMA introduced QuakeSmart, a unique outreach program designed specifically for the business community, particularly small and emerging businesses.

Reaching Out to Business Communities

In the first phase of the QuakeSmart program, FEMA orchestrated a series of four community forums that were held in areas of the Nation most at risk from earthquakes. The forums hosted by local Chambers of

Commerce and featured presentations by leading National mitigation experts who addressed topics, including improving earthquake safety, protecting building contents and Business Continuity Planning. All presenters emphasized that no community can fully recover from a disaster until its businesses have recovered.



Evansville, IN - Business leaders attend QuakeSmart forum

How Can a Chamber of Commerce Help Communicate the QuakeSmart Message?

- By organizing a standing mitigation committee made up of business owners, managers, area emergency management professionals, and Chamber Leadership.
- By using free communication networks: newsletters, website headers, Chamber meetings, and public service announcements to get the word out.
- By providing an informational section on the Chamber website to expand knowledge on earthquake mitigation, and creating links on the website to QuakeSmart.org

One of the requirements for selection as a forum host community is a commitment by the local Chamber of Commerce to create a plan for the further development of the QuakeSmart program within their community.

Getting Started:

Three things any business can do

QuakeSmart.org provides a set of tools to help organize and document mitigation efforts. Here's a short checklist that can help a business identify its risk:

- 1. List your facilities.** Identify each building your business uses, as well as each unique space within those buildings. Examples of unique spaces might include showrooms, office space, warehouse areas, or parking. Give attention to areas that support special equipment or processes that cannot easily be duplicated elsewhere, such as manufacturing.
- 2. List your critical assets and resources.** Identify the spaces, equipment, specialized personnel, or other features of your business that will be essential to restoring operations after a disruptive earthquake. Give special attention to any equipment or inventory that is difficult or expensive to replace.
- 3. Assign a recovery time to each facility and each specialized space.** The recovery time - hours, days, weeks, or months – is the time in which operations need to be restored in order to avoid devastating business losses. Listing a recovery time for each space will help prioritize and guide any technical assessments to come.

QuakeSmart.org also incorporates earthquake hazard mitigation information for business owners, managers, and their employees, including an educational video, brochures, and links to several resources, including the FEMA website where earthquake and other disaster information is available at no cost.

QuakeSmart also provides family-focused earthquake safety information on its website and encourages employers to share the information with their employees.

The QuakeSmart website will continue to deliver critical mitigation messages to the business community, as well as serve as a portal to other hazard mitigation websites.

Getting the Word Out

As a public awareness initiative, the QuakeSmart program is committed to ensuring that program information is made available to a wide audience. Public Service Announcements (PSAs), press releases, web postings, and local news coverage of the community forums are just a few examples of how QuakeSmart is promoting its earthquake mitigation message.

For More Information

For additional information on the QuakeSmart program visit the website at

<http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart>

Creating an Information Portal



One of the key features of the QuakeSmart initiative is its web presence. With the creation of <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart>, FEMA has opened a “general store” of mitigation information and resources. The website offers information ranging from knowing your risks to the fundamentals of preparing a Risk Reduction Plan.