

Business and Noninstructional Operations

EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES SYSTEM

Earthquake Preparedness

Earthquake emergency procedures shall be established in every school building having an occupant capacity of 50 or more students, or more than one classroom, and shall be incorporated into the comprehensive school safety plan. (Education Code 32282)

(cf. 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)

Earthquake emergency procedures shall be aligned with the Standardized Emergency Management System and the National Incident Management System. (Government Code 8607; 19 CCR 2400-2450)

(cf. 3516 - Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

The Superintendent/designee may work with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Seismic Safety Commission to develop and establish the earthquake emergency procedures. (Education Code 32282)

Earthquake emergency procedures shall outline the roles and responsibilities of students and staff during and after an earthquake.

Earthquake emergency procedures shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 32282)

1. A school building disaster plan, ready for implementation at any time, for maintaining the safety and care of students and staff
2. A drop procedure whereby each student and staff member takes cover under a table or desk, dropping to his/her knees, with the head protected by the arms and the back to the windows

Drop procedures shall be practiced at least once each school quarter in elementary schools and at least once each semester in secondary schools.

3. Protective measures to be taken before, during, and following an earthquake.

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4. A program to ensure that students and staff are aware of and properly trained in the earthquake emergency procedure system.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

Staff and students shall be informed of the dangers to expect in an earthquake and procedures to be followed. Students shall be instructed to remain silent and follow directions given by staff in such an emergency. Staff and students also shall be taught safety precautions to take if they are in the open or on the way to or from school when an earthquake occurs.

Earthquake emergency procedures shall designate primary and alternative locations outside of buildings, which may include areas off campus if necessary, where individuals on a school site will assemble following evacuation. In designating such areas, the Superintendent/designee shall consider potential post-earthquake hazards outside school buildings including, but not limited to, power lines, trees, covered walkways, chain link fences that may be an electric shock hazard, and areas near buildings that may have debris.

Earthquake emergency procedures also shall outline primary and alternative evacuation routes that avoid areas with potential hazards to the extent possible. The needs of students with disabilities shall be considered when planning evacuation routes.

The Superintendent/designee shall consider the danger of a post-earthquake tsunami when developing evacuation routes and locations, including the need to evacuate to higher ground.

The Superintendent/designee shall identify at least one individual at each school site to determine if an evacuation is necessary, the best evacuation location, and the best route to that location when an earthquake occurs.

The Superintendent/designee shall identify potential earthquake hazards in classrooms and other District facilities, including, but not limited to, areas where the main gas supply or electric current enters the building, suspended ceilings, pendant light fixtures, large windows, stairwells, science laboratories, storage areas for hazardous materials, shop areas, and unsecured furniture and equipment. To the extent possible, dangers presented by such potential hazards shall be minimized by securing equipment and furnishings and removing heavy objects from high shelves.

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Earthquake While Indoors at School

When an earthquake occurs, the following actions shall be taken inside buildings and classrooms:

1. Staff shall have students perform the drop procedure. Students should stay in the drop position until the emergency is over or until further instructions are given.
2. In laboratories, burners should be extinguished, if possible, before taking cover.
3. As soon as possible, staff shall move students away from windows, shelves, and heavy objects or furniture that may fall.
4. After the earthquake, the Principal/designee shall determine whether planned evacuation routes and assembly locations are safe and shall communicate with teachers and other staff.
5. When directed by the Principal/designee to evacuate, or if classrooms or other facilities present dangerous hazards that require immediate evacuation, staff shall account for all students under their supervision and shall evacuate the building in an orderly manner.

Earthquake While Outdoors on School Grounds

When an earthquake occurs, the following actions shall be taken by staff or other persons in authority who are outdoors on school grounds:

1. Staff shall direct students to walk away from buildings, trees, overhead power lines, power poles, or exposed wires.
2. Staff shall have students perform the drop procedure.
3. Staff shall have students stay in the open until the earthquake is over or until further directions are given.

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Earthquake While on the Bus

If students are on the school bus when an earthquake occurs, the bus driver shall take proper precautions to ensure student safety, which may include pulling over to the side of the road or driving to a location away from outside hazards, if possible. Following the earthquake, the driver shall contact the transportation dispatch for instructions before proceeding on the route or, if such contact is not possible, drive to an evacuation or assembly location and wait for further instructions.

(cf. 3543 - Transportation Safety and Emergencies)

Subsequent Emergency Procedures

After an earthquake episode has subsided, the following actions shall be taken:

1. Staff shall extinguish small fires if safe.
2. Staff shall provide first aid to any injured students, take roll, and report missing students to the Principal/designee.
3. Staff and students shall refrain from lighting any stoves or burners or operating any electrical switches until the area is declared safe.
4. All buildings shall be inspected for water and gas leaks, electrical breakages, and large cracks or earth slippage affecting buildings.
5. The Principal/designee shall post staff at safe distances from all building entrances and instruct staff and students to remain outside the buildings until they are declared safe.
6. The Principal/designee shall request assistance as needed from the District office or District Emergency Operations Center if activated. The Principal/designee shall also request assistance directly from fire and law enforcement as needed for emergency services.
7. The Superintendent/designee shall request assistance as needed from the city Emergency Operations Centers, if activated, or the emergency management departments, fire and police departments, city and county building inspectors, and utility companies and shall confer with them regarding the advisability of closing the school.

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8. The Superintendent/designee shall provide updates to parents/guardians of District students and members of the community about the incident, any safety issues, and follow-up directions.

Legal References:

EDUCATION CODE

32280-32289 School safety plans

GOVERNMENT CODE

3100 Public employees as disaster service workers

8607 Standardized Emergency Management System

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 19

2400-2450 Standardized Emergency Management System

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES PUBLICATIONS

The ABCs of Post-Earthquake Evacuation: A Checklist for School Administrators and Faculty
Guide and Checklist for Nonstructural Earthquake Hazards in California Schools, January 2003

School Emergency Response: Using SEMS at Districts and Sites, June 1998

WEB SITES

American Red Cross: <http://www.redcross.org>

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services: <http://www.caloes.ca.gov>

California Seismic Safety Commission: <http://www.seismic.ca.gov>

Federal Emergency Management Agency: <http://www.fema.gov/hazards/earthquakes>

National Incident Management System: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims>