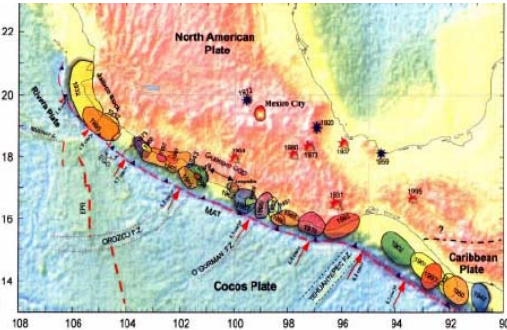


## Sound Practice No. 6

### Permanent Plan for Contingencies in Mexico City Earthquakes Chapter

#### I. Permanent Plan for Contingencies in Mexico City

Mexico City is one of the biggest human settlements around the world and it is exposed to different kinds of risks, particularly, those related to geologic phenomena. In the City, the earthquakes have caused the most severe impacts because its complex tectonic setting that includes: North America, Cocos, Rivera and the Caribbean Plates. Therefore, the area in which the City is located is considered to have a high seismic activity.



As a result, the government of the Federal District has designed and implemented several policies, plans and programs for disaster prevention and reduction, and also, it has increased the dissemination of information among inhabitants. In this context, the authorities developed the Permanent Plan for Contingencies in Mexico City, which is in charge of planning, organizing and coordinating the attention among dependencies for facing and coping a possible disaster.



This plan describes the procedures and responsibilities of each one of the government and no-government institutions in order to avoid duplication of activities, promote the efficiency and optimal use of the human, material, technological, and economic resources available, and strength the coping capacities in the Federal District.

#### II. Objectives

The general objective of this plan is to prevent and mitigate the effects caused by earthquakes of great magnitude through coordinated actions known as: **main or core processes**. In case of seismic emergencies, these main processes are divided into two, operative and supportive. Each one of them is coordinated by the Ministry of Government in the Federal District and the institution designated as responsible for their implementation and control.

a. In the case of the **operative process**, the actions defined in this plan are the following:

1. Detection and Damage Evaluation
2. Rescue and Salvage

3. Hospital and Health Attention
4. Temporary Refuges
5. Rehabilitation and Reestablishment
6. Public Security and Feasibility

On the other hand, in the **support process**, the actions defined in this plan are the following:

7. Supply
8. Emergency Acquisitions
9. Juridical Support
10. Social Communication
11. Computer System



### III. Characteristics of the Main Process

#### 1. Detection and Damage Evaluation

In the detection stage the objectives are:

- Have a quick vision of the magnitude of the damage
- Identify the damaged areas
- Have a preliminary report of the damages in buildings, vital public services, strategic facilities and roads

In the stage of damage evaluation objectives are:

- Determine the habitability and functionality of the vital services, properties, strategic facilities and urban infrastructure
- Estimate the human and material losses and people wounded
- Develop a technical recognition of the magnitude of damages
- Define if the condition of the properties is:  
Inhabitable, Not inhabitable or with a Dubious Security
- Define if the condition of the vital services is:  
Functional, Not Functional or with a Dubious Security
- If the condition of the properties or vital services it is dubious, the appropriate institution will make a detailed revision



#### 2. Search and Rescue

The objective of this process is guarantying the safeguard of the affected population by the implementation and coordination of the activities that allow the attention, search and rescue of injured people.



#### 3. Hospital Attention and Health

The objectives of this process are:

- Offer integral attention to patients
- Prevent and to mitigate contagious illnesses

#### 4. Temporary Shelters

This process has the objective to provide basic services, food, medical care and security, to all affected people.

#### 5. Rehabilitation and Restoration

This process has the objective to restore the functionality and bring vital services, strategic facilities, properties and roads, back to normal as soon as possible. The facilities that will have priority to be assisted are:

- Water System
- Sewage System
- Electric power facilities
- Telecommunications facilities
- Street lights
- Public Transportation
- Roads and other land communication
- Hospitals
- Schools
- Other services
- Strategic Facilities



#### 6. Public Security and Feasibility

The objective of this process is to provide security for the disaster attention phase, preserving goods and strategic facilities, controlling the damaged areas, and supporting the evacuation actions, among others.

#### 7. Emergency Acquisitions

This process has the objective to provide goods and services dedicated to the attention of the disaster.

#### 8. Supply

The objective of this process is satisfying with the necessary provisions the affected population. For this reason, this process is focused on the coordination, reception and acquisition of provisions for the storage centers, temporary shelters, popular dining rooms and rescue brigades.



#### 9. Legal (judiciary) Support

The objective of this process is to offer legal services to affected people and authorities by counseling and advice. Affected people will be legally represented by public attorneys in case of emergency or disasters.

**10. Communication with the community**

The objective of this process is to inform the population about the emergency situation, and making people feel secure as a result of the actions and strategies implemented by the Federal District Government.

**11. Computer System**

This process looks at optimizing the Federal District Government operative capacity along with the civil organizations for emergency attention by using technologies and computer system administration, which will help in the decision making process and in following the instructions and activities established in the Permanent Plan.

Each one of the discussed processes include several government departments and organizations that intervene according to their mandate, carrying out general or specific activities, either as responsible of the main process or just to support other institutions.

**IV. Coordinating Center of Operations (COO)**

It is important to mention that this Permanent Plan is activated every time a large emergency or disaster takes place. It operates with the existing infrastructure and the government institutions develop their common activities with more focus in disaster attention and recovery. However, all the institutions and their actions and strategies, are subordinated to the Coordinating Center of Operations, who is the maximum authority for disaster management during the phase of recovery of the city. This plan should be activated in maximum one hour-time after a severe seismic impact in the city, and it is expected that all government institutions follow the previously established and agreed upon actions, based on the coordination plan established among the different institutions.

The Coordinating Center of Operations for the Federal District (CCO) is constituted by the Chief of Government of the Federal District, the director of the Ministry of Government in the Federal District, representatives of some other public institutions, some members of the Civil Protection Council in the Federal District, and finally, some members of the Ministry of National Defense (SDN). The Chief of Government will be the president of this center, the executive secretary will be constituted by the director of the Ministry of Government; the director of the General Direction of Civil Protection in the Federal District will be in charge of the Technical Secretary, and the General Director for Social Communication will be responsible for the Information and Liaison Coordination.

The CCO is responsible for developing the following functions:

1. Declare an area as the disaster area
2. Activate the Permanent Plan for Contingencies in the Federal District
3. Request an official declaration of Natural Disaster
4. Establish a priority action plan
5. Carry out meetings to evaluate the general situation as needed





6. Request federal and other instances support
7. Authorize the acquisitions, recruitment and lease of goods, services and public work
8. Constantly inform the population of the situation through mass media
9. Verify the progress made in the field

Each institution will set up a Control Secretariat, in maximum one hour-time after the Permanent Plan is activated. This control secretariat will coordinate all the actions established in this plan. Additionally, each affected delegation will also install a Delegation Position Control, supervised by the Delegation Chief and integrated by general directors at this government level. In the case of the delegations that were not affected by the seismic activities, they have to support the ones that were damaged.

The governmental institutions that will coordinate the main process through the constitution of specialized civil organizations according with this Permanent Plan for Contingencies in Mexico City are the following:

1. Ministry of Public Administration in the Federal District
2. Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
3. Ministry of Economic Development
4. Ministry of Environment
5. Ministry of Building Work and Services
6. Ministry of Social Development
7. Ministry of Health
8. Ministry of Finances
9. Ministry of Public Transportation
10. Ministry of Tourism
11. Ministry of Culture
12. General Justice Attorney of the Federal District
13. Mayor Official
14. General Inspector of the Federal District
15. Juridical and Legal Advisor

Each one of these institutions is the responsible of specific activities during the emergency and recovery process, and the others support the one in charge. The responsibilities of these institutions are distributed in the following way (See table A):

**TABLE A. Responsible Organizations and the Main Collaborator according to the Permanent Plan for Contingencies**

Main Process/Institution	Ministry of Government	Ministry of Public Security Ministry of Economic Work and Services	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Social Development	Ministry of Environment and Urban Development and Housing	Ministry of Culture	Ministry of Finances	Ministry of Economic Development	Mayor Official General Direction of Social Communication	Ministry of Tourism	Ministry of Public Transportation	General Inspector	Juridical and Legal Advisor	General Justice Attorney	General Social Attorney	Delegations	Firemen	Ministry of the National Defense	Red Cross	Forensic Surgeon Services	Social and Civil Organizations Academic & Professional Institutions	
<b>Coordination</b>	R																					
<b>Operative Process</b>																						
Detection & damage evaluation	R	R			C	C			C	C							C		C			C
Rescue & Salvage Hospital & Health Attention	R	C	C	C	C						C						C	C	C	C	C	C
Temporary Refuges Rehabilitation & Reestablishment Public Security & Feasibility			R	C													C		C	C		C
	C		C	R	C	C	C				C						C	C	C			C
		C	C	C	R	C	C			C					C	C	C	C				C
	R					C					C			C		C	C	C				
<b>Support Process</b>																						
Emergency Acquisitions								C		R							C					
Supply				C				C	R								C		C			C
Social Communication				C										R								
Juridical Support													C	R	C	C	C					
Computer System									R													

R = Responsible, C = Main Collaborator

With this plan, the Government of the Federal District makes evident that its policies, plans and programs are oriented to the prevention of disasters because it is developing the coping capacities for facing emergency situations. The government of the Federal District has shown that it is seriously engaged in creating the appropriate conditions for making the city a safer place, improving coordination among governmental and no-governmental institutions.

## **References**

Gobierno del Distrito Federal de Mexico, Plan Permanente de Contingencias, presentacion y entrevista con el Ingeniero Luis Wintergerst Toledo, Director de Proteccion Civil, Agosto 2006.

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## **Knowledge Base Coding Reference:**

Name of the Practice: Permanent Plan for Contingencies in Mexico City  
Contact Person(s): Fabiola Sagrario Sosa Rodriguez  
Contact Address: fsosa@colmex.mx  
Written by: Fabiola Sagrario Sosa Rodriguez, Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, 3cd Local Intern Program, Mexico City-Mexico