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STATE OFFERS TRAINING FOR POST-EARTHQUAKE BUILDING INSPECTORS

(Salem) If Oregon suffered a major earthquake, would we have enough people qualified to determine whether buildings – from homes to fire stations and hospitals – were still safe to occupy and use? A new study estimates that a magnitude 8.5 earthquake caused by the movement of tectonic plates off the Oregon coast would destroy or extensively damage 54,000 buildings and leave 12,400 people in need of basic shelter. These are conservative estimates. Most of the damage would likely be concentrated on the coast and in the population centers of western Oregon.

The state Building Codes Division is helping to prepare for the rapid damage assessment critical to public health and safety in such a catastrophe by offering a special training seminar. **“Procedures for Post-Earthquake Safety Evaluation of Buildings”** will be available at sites across Oregon on February 25, 1999 using the state’s Video and Online Services system (formerly known as Oregon Ed-Net).

This one-day program is targeted toward a wide spectrum of individuals with applicable skills, including architects, engineers, contractors, fire officials, building plans examiners, and building inspectors. The course is intended to teach participants how to inspect buildings for safety of occupancy, restricted use, or closure. Completion of the course is a requirement for registration with the state as a post-earthquake damage inspector. The course is also useful to other emergency responders such as police, firefighters, emergency managers, and military personnel.

The Applied Technology Council developed the course, commonly known as ATC-20, for use nationwide. By offering it, the Building Codes Division hopes to create a large pool of qualified damage inspectors to call upon in the event of a disaster.

Potential participants should request a registration form by contacting Victoria Narkon at the Building Codes Division, 503-378-3102, P.O. Box 14470, Salem 97309. Interested parties with design, construction, or building inspection experience are encouraged to also request information about registration to serve as a post-earthquake damage inspector.

The Building Codes Division is offering this seminar to participants free of charge.