

Playbook: This version won't be the final one

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four-day regional drill that offered a look at how prepared the Pacific Northwest is for an earthquake and tsunami.

Priorities

The newest version gives the state a clearer sense of how to prioritize tasks and track progress, said Andrew Phelps, director of the Office of Emergency Management.

"That way, we aren't wasting any of the available resources on things that weren't absolutely critical," Phelps said.

In the first hour, the steps are basic: contact the governor, determine what staff are available and start notifying agencies.

"The first hour, it's all about finding your feet," Phelps said. "That first hour it's all about notifications."

Within six hours, the priorities include having the governor declare a state of emergency, assessing roads and bridges for damages and working to get emergency supplies, establishing communications with local government and sending information to the public.

Unlike other disasters that are more self-contained — like a dam collapse — the state has to plan for a response with major infrastructure damage and some staff not able to work.

As a result, tools like amateur radio networks would be used for communication instead of cell phones.

"We can't write a plan based on the staff that we have available today, the telephone and Internet service we have today, the transportation infrastructure we have today the energy infrastructure we have today," Phelps said.

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Andrew Phelps | director of the Office of Emergency Management

"We have to write our plans assuming that most of that stuff is not going to be available," he said.

Within 12 hours, more is known. At least three lifeline routes are established, providing a clear, designated pathway for getting help to people. Officials know what Oregon airports are usable for response missions. Information about hospitals — both damages and bed capacity — has been gathered.

Within 24 hours, mass care for the displaced has started: medical care, meals and shelter for pets and animals is in place.

For Oregonians, emergency planning can be done at a household level. That includes having an emergency kit of food, water and other necessities for at least 14 days.

"Everyone that is prepared has a better chance of being a disaster survivor and not a disaster victim," Phelps said. "Are people going to die during a Cascadia earthquake? Yes, but more people are going to survive."

Stan Thomas would be at the forefront of a response to provide mass care to survivors. He's an administrator of occupational health, safety and emergency services for the Oregon Department of Human Services and

Oregon Health Authority.

The playbook is crucial because everyone responding has to have a sense of what the priorities are, even if communication is lost, said Thomas, currently on assignment at the Camp Fire in California.

The Camp Fire response, he said, is a reminder of the need to plan beyond the first day: what happens tomorrow and the next week and beyond.

Different tasks

The playbook also is a reminder that multiple agencies are involved, all with different tasks. The playbook arranges agency action side by side.

That helps when coordinating a response, said Eric Gebbie, a planning section chief for the Oregon Health Authority's health security, preparedness and response program.

"For example, we need to change our plans to deploy Medical Reserve Corps teams on Day 1 if certain roads and airfields are not expected to be open yet," Gebbie said in an email.

This version of the playbook won't be the final one.

"This is still a work in progress and our work's not done yet," Phelps said. "If the ground started shaking now, that's the plan we'd be using."



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

The Chisana Creek outfall has had bacteria readings more than three times above the state standard. High readings have long been an issue at this outfall in Tolovana State Park.

Bacteria: 'We are going to look for all the funding available'

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outfall's configuration. An open system would also most likely require reconfiguration, and could bring other challenges, such as monitoring what kind of waste could fall or collect in open drainage ditches.

Both systems are effective,

La Bonte said, but will likely be expensive.

As engineers conduct the study, La Bonte said she is reaching out to the state and working with the Department of Environmental Quality to get grants to cover the project.

"It's been very much a needle-in-the-haystack

problem, which is very frustrating for me," she said. "It's a top priority and we are going to do everything we can to address it. We're not going to let money be a showstopper with the project. It's too important. We are going to look for all the funding available."

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