

News

Oregon Gets a New Playbook for Responding to an Earthquake

Playbook provides two-week blueprint for state’s response and expectations

By Ben Botkin
The Statesman Journal

SALEM, Ore. — Oregon has a new playbook for preparing and responding to a major earthquake that dictates what should be tackled over time versus a list of tasks to get done.

The playbook provides a two-week blueprint for the state’s response and expectations for prioritizing Oregon’s recovery from what would be the deadliest natural disaster in the U.S.

Oregon faces the threat of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that would hit the 700-mile Cascadia Subduction Zone, rippling from the coastal counties and impacting much of the state and neighboring Washington.

Emergency planners estimate coastal areas would have as little as 15 minutes notice to escape an incoming tsunami, and as many as 25,000 people could die. About a million Oregonians could be impacted in other ways: needing shelter, food and medication while waiting for help.

To prepare for the worst-case scenario, Oregon’s Office of Emergency Management has updated and revised its response plan, a 100-page document called the Cascadia Playbook.

Times for responding and recovering are a key change from two previ-

ous editions.

Emergency planners have laid out steps they would take after an earthquake based on intervals of time: the first hour, the first six hours, the first 12 hours and beyond.

The shift to focus on time comes after the 2016 Cascadia Rising exercise, a four-day regional drill that offered a look at how prepared the Pacific Northwest is for an earthquake and tsunami.

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.

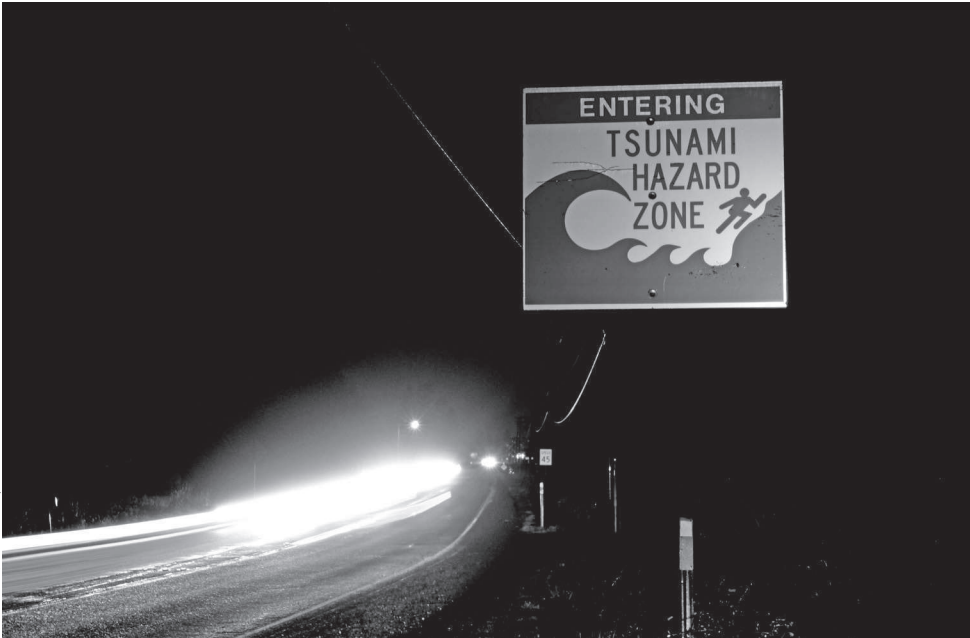
As a result, tools like amateur radio networks would be used for communication instead of cell phones.

“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.

“Everyone that is prepared has a better chance of being a disaster survivor and not a disaster victim

“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,



In this March 11, 2011, file photo, car headlights from a steady stream of cars form a line as residents evacuate the coastal town of Seaside, Ore., after the warning of a tsunami surge from a Japanese earthquake was issued. Oregon has a new playbook for preparing and responding to a major earthquake that dictates what should be tackled over time versus a list of tasks to get done.

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.

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ter 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.

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,” Bebbie 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.”

2 Deadly Shootings Send a Chill Through Black Gun Owners

Shootings of Jemel Roberson and Emantic Bradford Jr. amplify fears of being seen with a gun, even when trying to intervene

By Jesse J. Holland
Associated Press

ODENTON, Md. — Gun-rights advocates like to say, “The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun.” Some black gun owners, though, are not so sure it’s a wise idea for them to try to be the good guy and pull out a weapon in public.

Twice in the span of 11 days last month, a black

man who drew a gun in response to a crime in the U.S. was shot to death by a white police officer after apparently being mistaken for the bad guy.

Some African-Americans who are licensed to carry weapons say cases like those make them hesitant to step in to protect others.

“I’m not an advocate of open-carry if you’re

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