

## **Earthquake Preparedness Suggestions For the Nevada Tourism Industry**

If there is a strong earthquake, visitors in Nevada will have special concerns. You may be the first person they ask for help or information. In general, the visitor may be surprised that Nevada has earthquakes, but will not blame anyone that the earthquake occurred. The more important issues will be finding the information that they need quickly and reliably, and they may come to you. Your response may determine whether the visitor leaves with a good or bad impression of our community. Your response also may contribute to whether the national press, which will quickly show up, will report a prepared community that put its guests first. A prepared community will leave a better impression, and the visitor will feel more confident about returning after the emergency is over. The purpose of this information sheet is to help you respond well. These suggestions are based on disaster experiences in other communities with a significant visitor population. This side identifies two things that you can do before the earthquake. The back side identifies some questions that the visitor is likely to have after the earthquake, and suggests a helpful response.

### **Before the earthquake:**

#### **Nonstructural hazards**

We suggest that you approach the earthquake with the assumption that your building's structure will not be damaged in an earthquake. Buildings that are constructed to meet modern codes may also experience some damage, but there is nothing you can do about that. However, in recent earthquakes, nonstructural damage has caused far greater economic losses. Nonstructural damage is what happens when computers or dishes fall off shelves and break. There is plenty you can do to avoid this kind of problem.

We recommend use of inexpensive measures to prevent nonstructural damage in your guest rooms. These measures will simultaneously prevent things falling on and injuring your guests. In a typical hotel room, the nonstructural hazards are framed pictures falling off walls, television sets falling off their shelves, the cabinet holding the television set toppling, lamps toppling, and irons falling from the shelves. Inexpensive restrainers (under \$10.00 / room) or thoughtful placement can prevent these potential hazards from injuring the visitor, and these restrainers would also save you from the cost of replacing the items.

#### **Employee training**

Think about the services the visitor is likely to need immediately after an earthquake. The back of this sheet gives our suggestions. Prepare and organize your employees to respond to these needs.

#### **For More Information**

Nevada Seismological Laboratory  
Nevada Earthquake Safety Council

## **After the earthquake...**

### **Facility Check**

Immediately dispatch a team of employees to check every room, elevator, stair well, swimming pool, weight room, and other guest facility. Issues to check are:

- Injuries

- Stress-related health problems (heart attacks)

- Damage to the room (broken windows, fallen plaster)

- Telephone should be “hooked”

Questions: Defer to the front desk, so that the check can be accomplished quickly.

### **Telephone**

Your guests are likely to want to immediately advise family/friends outside the area that they are ok. We discourage using the telephone except in case of emergency. Telephone service is likely to be very limited and overwhelmed. Advise your visitor to avoid calling if they can, but that if they absolutely must call, they should make their calls very short, and call only one contact, who can then tell others. If you have email service, you can offer the guest that as an alternative.

### **Travel – general**

The visitor may want to go home as soon as possible. If there is damage in our area, this is likely to be a helpful decision. We recommend that guests be allowed to leave without penalty (i.e. paying for unused days). Establish a clearing house for road and airport information, where information gathered by one person can be given to others. Tell your guests that you are doing it, and make a diligent effort to establish what transportation options are viable. If one of your guests leaves, finds his path home blocked, and returns, we encourage you to make every effort to accommodate him.

### **Travel – by car**

Advise guests to wait until the road conditions are known. Depending on the earthquake location, roads may be blocked by landslides or bridge failures. If guests leave immediately, a possible outcome is traffic jams at road closures, obstructing emergency vehicles and frustrating the visitor. The best advice is to wait until they know they can go. Advise guests that gas stations may lose power, and consequently that gas supplies may be limited.

### **Travel – by plane**

There is a possibility that air service may be disrupted. The best advice is to wait until they know that their flight will not be affected.

### **Information**

The tourist will want to know what happened. Be sure to get reliable information from the news media, government sources, or the Nevada Seismological Laboratory. Avoid spreading rumors. Car radios may be able to receive information if AC power is interrupted.

- Road Report

- Nevada Seismological Laboratory