2012 Statewide Medical and Health Exercise

# Power Loss Scenario

Over the past several weeks, a series of earthquakes over a magnitude 4.0 have been recorded in California. There are no reports of damage, but the increase in both frequency and intensity has spurred interest in personal preparedness. Media outlets report a spike in sales of disaster supplies, along with increased enrollments in citizen emergency response training and American Red Cross preparedness courses.

There has also been an increase in inquiries both by media and elected officials on the state of preparedness among healthcare organizations and public safety agencies. The aging infrastructure, vulnerabilities from earthquake to healthcare and public safety buildings, as well as the status of communication systems and transportation systems are being highlighted in the media reports. In addition, with the 2013 deadline outlined in California Senate Bill 1953[[1]](#footnote-1), there is concern over the status of the healthcare infrastructure. Of particular focus is the threat of a massive power failure that could occur if a major fault line ruptures.

At the direction of the California Department of Public Health, local health departments have been working with healthcare partners including hospitals, clinics and long term care facilities to determine their vulnerabilities in the event there is a failure of the power supply. Under the direction of the California Emergency Management Agency, similar planning is underway through Operational Area emergency management officials with public safety agencies and non-governmental organizations. Authorities have requested that emphasis be placed on daily and emergency power needs and current sources, including the identification of critical systems that will be maintained by generator support and the requirements for support of outside agencies/organizations.

1. [**Senate Bill 1953 (SB 1953)**](http://www.oshpd.ca.gov/FDD/seismic_compliance/SB1953/SB1953Overview.pdf)requires hospitals that have Structural Performance Category 1 (SPC-1) buildings (*those that are considered hazardous and at risk of collapse or significant loss of life in the event of an earthquake*) must be replaced or retrofitted to higher seismic safety standards by 2013, or later with an approved extension.  Otherwise, acute care services may no longer be allowed to be provided in the building(s). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)