

# WHITE PAPER 1-2014

Washington State Department of Health  
and  
City of Olympia, Washington

**Date: January 2, 2014**

*Initial Draft 12/17/13*

**Title:** Guideline – Post-Disaster SAP Evaluations by DOH Strike Teams

**By:** **WA State DOH:** *Kevin A. Scarlett (WA Architect, Certified SAP Instructor)*  
**City of Olympia:** *Tom Hill (City Building Official)*

**Abstract:** In the event of a natural disaster, this white paper is intended to establish standard processes by which certified SAP officials (DOH Strike Teams) from the Washington State Department of Health may provide building safety evaluations for Hospitals & other State Licensed Health Care Facilities within the City of Olympia jurisdiction. These strike teams would coordinate evaluation processes and provide prompt notification to the local building official of the results. Although the focus of this white paper is on earthquake response, these procedures may be applied to emergency response of any kind, including large scale flood, wind, landslide or terrorist events.

**Intent:** Establish a pre-agreement between Washington State Department of Health and the City of Olympia, Washington allowing Immediate Deployment of Specific DOH Strike Teams to perform SAP evaluations of WA State Licensed Health Care Facilities as deputized by the City of Olympia.

**INTRODUCTION:** After an earthquake, building officials are generally responsible for providing ATC-20 evaluations of the structures within their jurisdiction. Building owners generally want to know as soon as possible whether or not their building is safe to occupy. WA DOH also has a direct interest in the continued safe operation of all State Licensed Facilities.

If the earthquake is large enough, the building official may not have the resources available to provide those evaluations in a timely manner. DOH Strike teams are specifically specialized to assess the condition of various specialty building systems relating to the safe delivery of Health Care (such as Med Gas, Critical, Life Safety & Emergency Power Systems (including generators, pumps, plumbing and other support building systems which must remain in operation, in good repair for the Facility to continue to function as intended).

Pre-designated SAP Certified DOH Strike Teams could aid the building official in performing the evaluations, but also engaging their services (if desired by the Local AHJ). Providing orientation to the strike teams of the local jurisdiction's policies, and getting them assigned to evaluate particular buildings or focus areas all take time (most of these policy and focus issues can be pre-arranged). Each of these DOH strike teams will have one or more SAP Certified Structural Engineers in cooperation with SEAW.

In the mid 1990's, the City of San Francisco started their Building Occupancy Resumption Emergency Inspection Program (BORP). This program established requirements and procedures that allowed *building owners* to pre-qualify specific engineers to evaluate and "tag" buildings using the ATC-20 procedures.

In a similar, but slightly different fashion two AHJ's (State of Washington DOH and City of Olympia, WA) have decided to pre-qualify strike teams to assess and report on Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Boarding Homes within the Jurisdiction of the City of Olympia, WA. These DOH Strike Teams are fully trained and certified in using ATC-20 procedures along with additional process guidelines outlined below.

DOH Strike Teams would be deputized by the City\* to Post Placards thereby posted placards by the DOH Strike Teams would have full legal authority behind them. Procedures will be established whereby DOH Strike Teams report their findings to the Building Official. Therefore, the Building Official will have record of the safety status of all buildings assessed by DOH Strike Teams.

The intent of this agreement is to mobilize DOH Strike Teams more quickly with a triage approach to the overall Licensed Health Care Facility assessment (i.e. in order of Risk Category – refer to example below).

\*by written pre-agreement involving specific individuals fully certified to perform said duties and pre-evaluated by the City Building Official

The Basic Triage assumption is based on the assigned Risk Category per 2012 IBC Table 1604.5. An example outline;

Risk Category IV - Essential Structures

1. Hospitals, Surgery Centers & Free Standing Emergency Departments
2. Other Essential Structures (within Cat. IV) as assigned by City Building Official

Risk Category III

3. Nursing Homes
4. Boarding Homes
5. Other Licensed Care Facilities (within Cat. III)
6. Other Category III Structures as assigned by City Building Official

The guideline process proposed herein trades some possible duplication of effort for:

- Speed in getting buildings' initial postings done;
- Ensuring the postings have the appropriate authority behind them; and,
- Ensuring the building official receives the information necessary to maintain records of the posting status of buildings within the jurisdiction in a timely manner.

**Guideline Process:**

1. State and Local Agencies may form agreements establishing protocol for fast response DOH Strike Teams to perform rapid evaluations in accordance with ATC-20, ATC-45, etc.
2. In the event of an emergency, the DOH Strike Teams may conduct the evaluations, and post advisory placards on buildings. (Sample advisory placards are attached at the end of this white paper.)
3. DOH Strike Teams are responsible to report results of the evaluations to the building official of the local jurisdiction in a timely manner (real-time possible depending on status of area comms).
4. The building official may send departmental staff to post official placards on the buildings.
5. The building department is responsible for maintaining the records of the safety status of the buildings in its jurisdiction, including those posted by DOH Strike Teams.

**General Commentary:**

1. DOH Strike Teams entering into such an agreement are responsible for ensuring that staff assigned to perform the evaluations under this proposed Mutual Aid Agreement is qualified to do so. All DOH Strike Teams shall have an SAP Certified, WA licensed structural engineer as a part of all Strike Teams assessing Category IV Structures.
2. Advisory placards are posted under the deputized authority of the Building Official. Samples of suggested placards are attached.
3. Red and yellow placards posted by the DOH Strike Teams will be reported as soon as practical to the local building official (real-time if communication lines permit), unless instructed otherwise by the building official. Green tags may be reported on a less-frequent, but regular schedule, as determined by the building official.
4. The building official is responsible for ensuring building department staff performing the evaluations are qualified to do so. Once on site, they should verify the DOH Strike Teams posting before posting the official placard. It is recommended that if there is a disagreement with the posting, the building department staff should contact the DOH Strike Team who performed the evaluation, and discuss the posting with that Team directly.

Official placards carry the authority of the jurisdiction. If a state of emergency is declared, the posting authority is as prescribed in the declaration. If a state of emergency is not declared, the posting authority is as prescribed in the building code or other local ordinance. The 2012 International Building Code (IBC) regulates “unsafe structures” in Section 116, requiring them to be demolished or made safe.

Red placards should be posted as soon as possible. Yellow placards should be posted as soon as possible, but have a lower priority than red placards. Green placards may be posted as time is available.

5. There will be many requests for this ‘Posting’ information from the local politicians and media. All DOH Strike Teams are instructed to refer all quires to the City Building Official. All records are kept with and under the purview of the local building official.

# NO APPARENT HAZARD

## UNRESTRICTED OCCUPANCY PERMITTED

This structure has been evaluated (as indicated below) and no apparent structural hazard has been found.

**Evaluated Exterior Only**

**Evaluated Exterior and Interior**

Report any unsafe condition to local authorities; re-evaluation may be required.

Inspector Comments:

---

---

---

---

Facility Name and Address:

---

---

---

Owner contact information:

---

---

---

Evaluating firm contact information:

---

---

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

This facility was evaluated under emergency conditions for damage assessment.  
*This ADVISORY BUILDING EVALUATION TAG may be superseded by the placard of the authority having jurisdiction*

**DO NOT REMOVE, ALTER, OR COVER THIS PLACARD**

**CAUTION: AFTERSHOCKS AFTER THIS EVALUATION MAY INCREASE DAMAGE AND RISK.**

# RESTRICTED USE

**Caution:** This structure has been evaluated and found to be damaged as described below:

---

---

---

**Entry, occupancy, and use are restricted as indicated below, except as specifically authorized by the owner:**

Do not enter the following areas: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Brief entry allowed for access to contents: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Other restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Name and Address:

---

---

---

Owner contact information:

---

---

---

Evaluating firm contact information:

---

---

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

This facility was evaluated under emergency conditions for damage assessment.  
*This ADVISORY BUILDING EVALUATION TAG may be superseded by the placard of the authority having jurisdiction*

**DO NOT REMOVE, ALTER, OR COVER THIS PLACARD**  
**CAUTION: AFTERSHOCKS AFTER THIS EVALUATION MAY INCREASE DAMAGE AND RISK.**

# UNSAFE

## DO NOT ENTER OR OCCUPY

This structure has been found to be seriously damaged and is unsafe to occupy, as described below:

---

---

---

---

---

Facility Name and Address:

---

---

---

Owner contact information:

---

---

---

**DO NOT ENTER, EXCEPT AS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY THE OWNER. ENTRY MAY RESULT IN DEATH OR INJURY.**

Evaluating firm contact information:

---

---

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

This facility was evaluated under emergency conditions for damage assessment.  
*This ADVISORY BUILDING EVALUATION tag may be superseded by the placard of the authority having jurisdiction.*

**DO NOT REMOVE, ALTER, OR COVER THIS PLACARD**