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Building Officials**

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Administered By
J Addison Group, LLC
(Olympia, Washington)

December 14, 2011

To: City Mayors
From: Trace Justice, President
Re: Washington Building Safety Mutual Aid

Disasters such as earthquakes and floods can happen anytime and anywhere, leaving communities large and small reeling from their effects. To assist Washington communities to meet their obligations in responding to and recovering from disasters, the Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) took on the task of preparing the State's building safety agencies to assist each other. Toward that end, WABO championed ESHB 1406, the Washington Building Safety Mutual Aid System during the 2011 Washington Legislature and it passed unanimously.

This new legislation enables building departments across the State to support each other in the event of an emergency impacting a jurisdiction's ability to provide essential building safety services. WABO, recognizing the often limited staff levels of building departments, crafted the legislation to allow resource sharing not only in a declared disaster or other emergencies. Under the legislation, all Washington jurisdictions are eligible to participate if they choose to, so separate jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction agreements are unnecessary. The legislation has no impact on existing programs such as the State fire mobilization system. Reimbursement is left to the discretion of the requesting and responding jurisdictions.

In order to assist jurisdictions with the program, WABO is pleased to announce the availability of the **Building Safety Mutual Aid Tool Kit**. The tool kit is a collection of virtual resources including background information, legal documents, FEMA guidance, templates, and other resources to assist building safety agencies and their jurisdictions with implementation of the building safety mutual aid system. Jurisdictions may access the tool kit and the free resources it provides through the WABO web site at www.wabo.org (click on the tool kit link).

In addition, WABO is developing a Building Safety Emergency Responder credentialing program. After the next disaster strikes, individuals who are approved in advance will be available to assist with building safety inspections. This will help get people back in their homes and businesses as soon as possible. We encourage members of your building department to become credentialed so they can assist their neighbors.

For further information on the Washington Building Safety Mutual Aid System, please contact your local building official or the Washington Association of Building Officials at 360-628-8669.

Sincerely,

Trace Justice, CBO, ACO
WABO President