Documenting the geologic, geotechnical, and engineering effects of earthquakes are a critical element of post-earthquake response investigations. These data can increase the information available to public officials managing response and recovery and can expand upon lessons learned that can be incorporated into standards and practices for future hazard reduction. Currently, the State of Alaska does not have an earthquake specific plan outlining documentation procedures essential for investigation teams to quickly and efficiently evaluate aspects of destructive earthquakes. Therefore the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission recommends that the Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys develop a field guide for earthquake-response and investigations.

**POSITION STATEMENT**

Field investigations in the aftermath of damaging earthquakes are now common practice and typically conducted by multiple state and federal agencies, university researchers, and other professionals. These investigations provide the opportunity to collect information related to surface rupture processes, secondary ground deformation effects, and the response of the engineered or built environment to seismic shaking. Subtle geologic effects are often rapidly destroyed due to rebuilding efforts and other natural processes, and thus it is critical to archive the information in a timely and organized framework. The information can be useful to public

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officials in response and recovery efforts immediately following an earthquake and is valuable for developing standards and practices for future hazard reduction including improved seismic hazards maps and development decisions.

Due to differing priorities, compromised communication systems, and “on-the-fly” coordination, the effectiveness of post-earthquake studies often suffers from poor organization. General post-earthquake field guides have been published outlining the types of data that should be collected, and recommended methods for data access and organization (e.g. EERI 2003; 1996; Holzer, 2003). The Utah Geological Survey has published a post-earthquake action guide outlining the relative roles of staff in coordinating activities with other investigators and has developed field investigation guidelines and data forms to record observations (Solomon, 2001). These publications provide excellent resources for planning post-earthquake field investigations; however, rugged topography, poor access, and other logistical constraints may limit the usefulness of some aspects of these guides in Alaska. Therefore, it is essential that an Alaska specific post-earthquake investigation field guide be developed before the next major destructive earthquake occurs.

CONCLUSION

Post-earthquake response, recovery efforts, and planning to mitigate the effects of future earthquakes in Alaska will all benefit from the coordinated and systematic investigation and documentation of damage caused by a specific earthquake. Therefore, the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission recommends that the Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys develop a post-earthquake response and investigation field guide as part of its efforts to characterize geologic hazards.

REFERENCES


INTERNAL SECTION

Implementation & Assessment
The Commission will submit the policy recommendation to the Director of the Division of Geologic and Geophysical Surveys.
Measure of this policy recommendation will be gauged by its acceptance and funding requests for FY16.
The Commission’s Earthquake Hazards Committee will be responsible for the tracking this policy recommendation.

History
PR 2014-1 was adopted on 21 April 2014 by a unanimous vote of 6-0.