



Hospital

SEISMIC SAFETY

office of statewide health planning and development

Vol. 1 July 2005

California state law requires hospitals to evaluate their facilities, develop plans to meet seismic standards and ensure that their buildings are seismically sound.

This bulletin shares the latest news on OSHPD's partnership with the state's 442 acute care hospitals to meet those deadlines. We have also included recent news items that may be of interest to those involved in hospital construction.

To contact OSHPD about this bulletin, call 916-654-3004.

The OSHPD Ombudsman Hotline is 916-653-0288.

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor
State of California

S. Kimberly Belshé
Secretary
California Health &
Human Services Agency

David Carlisle, M.D. Ph.D.
Director
Office of Statewide
Health Planning and
Development



OSHPD Partners with Hospitals on Seismic Safety

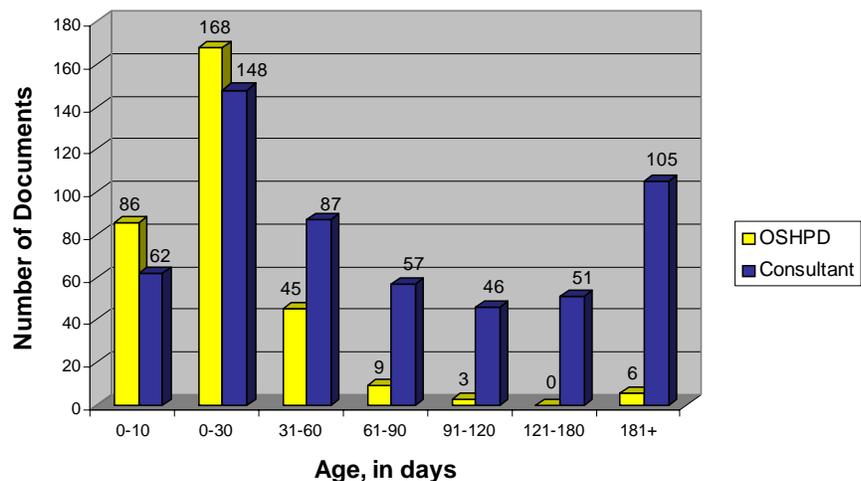
The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) is working closely with California's 442 acute care hospitals to insure that their facilities can withstand a major earthquake or other disaster, including possible terrorist attacks, and remain operational to serve the injured. As work progresses on the ambitious agenda laid out by state law, hospitals are moving ahead to retrofit or rebuild buildings that are old, outmoded and inadequate to meet modern structural and medical needs and designs.

As the state's "building department" for hospitals, OSHPD's staff of 200 engineers, architects and construction experts reviews mountains of architectural and engineering plans. Others inspect and monitor hospital construction from the ground up. OSHPD annually reviews more than 1,200 hospital projects.

Despite OSHPD's goal to continually improve its plan check process, and to return plans **within 60 days** to architects and engineers for corrections or additional work, delays arise. More than 70 percent of the returned plans have not been resubmitted to OSHPD, effectively stalling any further review of the plans.

Of the 750 projects currently under submission to OSHPD, 550 are with the design teams, with many remaining inactive for more than six months. OSHPD cannot approve plans they do not have, and hospitals cannot begin construction without that approval. The chart below illustrates the length of time these unapproved plans have been with OSHPD and the consultants. In order to determine which of these delayed projects are still viable and which have been cancelled by the hospitals, OSHPD will be contacting hospitals when plans remain with design teams for more than 150 days, to inform them that unless the plans are returned to OSHPD within 30 days, OSHPD will remove the project from its books.

Location of Hospital Plans
Submitted to OSHPD



Nonetheless, work does move forward. OSHPD has approved hundreds of projects under the seismic safety law; more are being approved every day. A number of major hospitals are under construction, all of which will incorporate seismic resistance design in addition to the latest in new technology.



Seismic Safety Notes.....

- **OSHPD has recently set up an “Ombudsman Hotline”** for general questions regarding hospital construction and issues regarding OSHPD’s Facilities Development Division. The 24/7 hotline is not intended to handle questions regarding code interpretation or routine construction that should be directed to OSHPD’s plan review or field personnel. Callers can leave their name, organization, contact number and the subject of their call. Someone with OSHPD will return the call within a day or two. The OSHPD Ombudsman Hotline is **1-916-653-0288**.
The Ombudsman can also be reached by email at Ombudsman@oshpd.ca.gov.
- **Safety and quality are important** in hospital redesign, but upscale amenities sell, according to a Robert Wood Johnson Health System executive quoted in the Wall Street Journal of February 8, 2005. According to the Journal, “Some industry experts question the wisdom of these costly frills” while hospitals “are fueling much of the increase in health-care costs.” “But,” adds the Journal, “hospitals say these new facilities can actually help reduce costs.....with energy-conservation and design features that help them operate more efficiently than older wards. The investments lead to lower overhead, more business, better care and increased patient satisfaction.”
- In a recent article in the Lodi News-Sentinel, hospital administrator Joe Harrington cites the **rapidly changing hospital environment**. “How we live now, and especially how we provide health care, would have been beyond most residents’ wildest imaginations. Training, technology, equipment, diagnostics and pharmacology have all advanced significantly in the past 60 years.”
- **“Building a new health care facility is still a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,”** according to Ken King, of El Camino Hospital in Mountain View. King calls California’s seismic requirements for hospitals, “a unique opportunity to look at ways of improving patient care and staff productivity through building design. While our priority is the function of the facility in the event of an earthquake, we also wanted to improve productivity the rest of the time...and looked at how better hospital design can help reduce staff stress and fatigue, improve patient safety, reduce patient and family stress and improve overall health care quality.” Silicon Valley Business Journal, April 18, 2005.
- CEO Mike Purvis of Eureka’s St. Joseph Hospital recently announced plans for a 97,000-square-foot, \$79 million expansion of the hospital. According to the Eureka Times-Standard, Purvis cited state-mandated seismic building standards and the changing demographics of the community as factors in the plans. Purvis noted that that the main hospital is more than 50 years old and needs renovation beyond the seismic work. **“We’re practicing 21st century health care in a facility that was designed in the 1950s,”** Purvis said.
- Big plans are underway in San Francisco as the City approaches the **centennial anniversary of its disastrous 1906 earthquake and fire**. City officials plan to promote emergency-preparedness and celebrate San Francisco’s revival since the disaster hit a century ago. The yearlong celebration will honor the thousands who died in the Magnitude 7.8 earthquake and promote preparedness efforts. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, Mayor Gavin Newsom will appoint a committee to oversee what he calls “a yearlong celebration of renewal.”
- Did you know that scientists with the California Department of Conservation estimate the following:
 - A repeat of the 1906 San Francisco quake would rupture four segments of the San Andreas fault and would cause approximately **\$54 billion economic loss** due to building damage
 - In Southern California, the most damaging potential quake would be a Magnitude 7.1 event on the Puente Hills fault, with **estimated losses of \$69 billion**. A Magnitude 6.9 on the Newport-Inglewood fault would result in about **\$49 billion in expected losses**.