

Reclamation Building Seismic Safety Program Briefing Bulletin No. 3

Process for Selecting Buildings for the Rapid Visual Screening Inspections --- Exemption Criteria ---

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The Reclamation Building Seismic Safety Program (Program) completes RVS Inspections on Reclamation-owned building inventory on non-exempt buildings. These buildings are identified by applying Exemption Criteria to every building in the Reclamation Property Database (FIRM). The Exemption Criteria are designed to remove from consideration those buildings that offer very low (or no) risk to life safety. The main criteria for exemption is occupancy; i.e., the Program exempts all unoccupied buildings. Special structures (dams, pumping plants, bridges, transmission towers, industrial towers, equipment, piers, wharves, and hydraulic structures) are also exempt because they are required to perform to safety levels greater than life safety and generally have their own seismic safety programs. But powerplants located at damsites critical to national infrastructure and/or having a high generating capacity (200 MW) and located in a *High Level of Seismicity* were selected for seismic evaluation.

The remaining buildings are called "Non-Exempt" buildings and are candidates for the RVS inspection. But, before these inspections are initiated, the Area Office is asked to review the initial listing of RVS Candidates to confirm the list and to validate available building data. Because the list of RVS Candidates is based on the FIRM, and that database can sometimes contain outdated data, buildings can be mistakenly included in the list or inadvertently omitted from the list. The Area Office is the best source--because of their intimate knowledge with many or all of the identified buildings--to review the RVS candidate list by considering the Exemption Criteria, to add or remove buildings from the listing. Examples of this approach is when a building is mistakenly included on the RVS Candidates list because it is identified in the FIRM as an "Office" but the Area Office knows that the building has not been used as an office for many years and is actually unoccupied; this building would be removed from the list. Another prime example is when an occupied building is not yet identified in the FIRM so it is inadvertently omitted from the RVS Candidates listing; this building would be added to the list.

Exemption Criteria buildings are "Exempt" if they are:

- Occupied less that 2 hours per day by 1 person
- Special Structures
- Rehabilitated Buildings (i.e., a building that has been recently and fully upgraded to current seismic safety provisions)
- Federally constructed buildings designed after January 5, 1990
- Buildings scheduled for demolition or transfer in 5 years

By applying the Exemption Criteria and using their knowledge of the building inventory, the Area Office can refine the listing of RVS Candidates and, thereby, increase the efficiency of the RVS Inspection Phase of the Reclamation Building Seismic Safety Program.