

Reclamation Building Seismic Safety Program Briefing Bulletin No. 4

Risk Identification in Leased Buildings

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Reclamation Regional Resource Managers requested in June 1999 that the Reclamation Building Seismic Safety Program (Program) consider additional risk identification activities. It was determined at that time that the requirements outlined in Executive Order 12941 "*Seismic Safety of Existing Federally Owned or Leased Buildings*" did not provide consistent risk identification and risk reduction for all Reclamation employees or all occupants of Reclamation-owned buildings. Inconsistencies in risk identification were identified and resolutions implemented for a number of building or occupant groups, including employees in leased buildings.

Reclamation leases buildings from the Federal Government through the General Services Administration (GSA) and from private building management services. At that time, GSA had not performed comprehensive seismic risk identification activities on their entire building inventory and as a result did not provide updated seismic safety certification for these buildings. Most of the privately owned buildings that are either leased through GSA or through a private service had not been evaluated for seismic risk. Some of the more recent Reclamation leasing contracts require the certification of seismic safety in the leased space, but for leases that have not expired, corrective action cannot be enforced.

Building data have been obtained regarding these leased buildings. The data evaluated confirm that a comprehensive risk identification program has not been completed for all buildings leased by Reclamation. It should be noted that GSA's robust Building Seismic Safety Program is proactive in accomplishing seismic assessments and performing mitigation to reduce risk on a prioritized basis, but that private building owners accomplishments have not been tracked by the Program since the RVS screening activity. Exemption criteria were applied to the inventory to remove unoccupied or other low-risk buildings from consideration, and non-exempt buildings were inspected using the Rapid Visual Screening (RVS) process. The RVS process is completed onsite in about an hour by a structural engineer to gain an understanding of potential seismic risk of any given building. This activity has been approved by the GSA Seismic Safety Manager and coordinated through both the GSA and Reclamation property contacts. As with all RVS inspections, the cost of performing the activity is funded by the Program.

If buildings are found as being unacceptable as to risk to life safety or those that may be seismically hazardous and should be studied further, as a result of the RVS Inspections, documentation will be provided to the responsible Reclamation leasing official. The Program will then request, through this official, that when the lease expires that the building be certified and meet or exceed current seismic safety provisions.