

**WESTERN STATES SEISMIC POLICY COUNCIL
POLICY RECOMMENDATION 19-10**

**Joint WSSPC and EERI Policy for the Evaluation and Seismic Remediation
of School Buildings**

Policy Recommendation 19-10

The Western States Seismic Policy Council, with the support of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, recommends that each member state, province and territory establish as a goal that all school buildings be seismically resilient. Seismically vulnerable school buildings should be retrofitted or replaced by new earthquake resilient school buildings as an important part of a nationwide school earthquake resiliency goal.

Executive Summary

Our elementary and secondary school buildings contain the future of our country. Parents send their children to school every day with the belief that their children will be safe. However, many of the schools located in WSSPC's states, provinces and territories are older structures vulnerable to severe damage and even collapse in future earthquakes. This policy recommendation provides needed support for efforts to evaluate and remediate these hazards.

Background

The 1933 Long Beach, California M6.4 earthquake is well known for collapsing or severely damaging thousands of unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings, including over 230 school buildings. Fortunately, schools were not in session at the time of the earthquake. Had that been the case, thousands of children would have been injured or killed.

The outcry from this poor performance of school buildings directly led to the State of California passing the Field Act which mandated earthquake resistant construction requirements for future school buildings, and the Garrison Act which established the requirements for the seismic safety of existing school buildings.

Schools are increasingly used to shelter students in place during hazard events, including floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other emergencies. In addition, schools are often used as emergency shelters for citizens within their communities. Thus school building resilience is a key to protecting the local population under diverse hazardous conditions.

There have been notable efforts by some WSSPC member states, territories and provinces, including Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Utah, and British Columbia, to identify at-risk school buildings and to begin the process of remediation.

Internal Section:

Facilitation and Communication

This policy recommendation will be sent to WSSPC representatives in the member states, who will then be able to distribute it to policy and decision makers, elected officials, school districts, parent/teacher associations, teacher unions, school administrators, building departments and elected leaders.

Assessment

A measure of the acceptance and implementation of this policy recommendation is the number of states, provinces and territories as well as individual school districts that adopt a seismic retrofit evaluation and remediation plan for their school buildings.

History

- Policy Recommendation 16-10 was re-adopted as Policy Recommendation 19-10 by unanimous vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting April 26, 2019. Final Adoption requires EERI concurrence.
- Policy Recommendation 13-10 was re-adopted as Policy Recommendation 16-10 by unanimous vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting May 6, 2016.
- Policy Recommendation 19-10 was first adopted as Policy Recommendation 13-10 which was adopted by unanimous vote of the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting May 3, 2013.