No Good Deed Goes Unpunished: Rapid Assessment of Buildings After Natural Disasters

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Disaster: a sudden calamititous event bringing great damage, loss, or destruction

Natural Disaster: a sudden and terrible event in nature (such as a hurricane, tornado, or flood) that usually results in serious damage and many deaths

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U.S. 2017 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters

- North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana Drought Spring–Fall 2017
- Western Wildfires, California Firestorm Summer–Fall 2017
- California Flooding February 8–22
- Colorado Hail Storm and Central Severe Weather May 8–11
- Midwest Severe Weather June 12–16
- Midwest Severe Weather June 27–29
- South/Southeast Severe Weather March 26–28
- Minnesota Hail Storm and Upper Midwest Severe Weather June 9–11
- Midwest Tornado Outbreak March 6–8
- Central/Southeast Tornado Outbreak February 28–March 1
- Missouri and Arkansas Flooding and Central Severe Weather April 25–May 7
- Southeast Freeze March 14–16
- Southern Tornado Outbreak and Western Storms January 20–22
- Hurricane Harvey August 25–31
- Hurricane Irma September 6–12
- Hurricane Maria September 19–21

This map denotes the approximate location for each of the 16 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the United States during 2017.
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Recovery:

• the act or process of becoming healthy after an illness or injury : the act or process of recovering

• the act or process of returning to a normal state after a period of difficulty

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Recovery:

- the task of restoring the infrastructure and returning a community to normal operation

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How does Recovery begin?

By utilizing 2nd Responders to determine whether structures are suitable for re-habitation
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What are 2\textsuperscript{nd} Responders?

Trained and qualified individuals (recourse) capable of performing post-disaster damage assessments
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There are 4 recognized classes of 2nd Responders

- FEMA Structural Condition Evaluator (SCE)
- ICC Disaster Response Inspector (DRI)
- Cal OES SAP Assessor
- ATC 20 or 45 Assessor
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There are 4 methods of activating 2\textsuperscript{nd} Responders:

- Federal Resource (Request through EM)
- State Resource (Request through EM or BO)
- Mutual Aid Resource (Request through BO)
- Volunteer (Direct Request)
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National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA)
NCSEA is comprised of 44 structural engineering associations throughout the United States.
Each NCSEA Member Organization (MO) has a delegate that represents their Member Organization within NCSEA
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Structural Engineering Emergency Response
(SEER)

A Program of Professional Volunteers providing
Post-Disaster Assistance.
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SEER – Mission Statement:
To develop, manage, and deploy professional 2nd responders (Damage / Safety Assessment Professionals) who are properly trained and certified both domestically and internationally
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SEER Program
A comprehensive nationwide program consisting of four main components:

• Training
• Advocacy
• Roster Management
• Assistance Coordination
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SEER — Training
Facilitate and/or deliver training to design and construction professionals so as to qualify them to participate as 2nd responders at a Local, State or National level.

• ICC — DRI
• Cal OES — SAP
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SEER – Advocacy

• ICC and NCSEA have signed an agreement to partner in disaster response and coordinate our future efforts. The plan is to expand the 2nd Responder Roster, to develop a joint cobranded web page and to coordinate the NCSEA and ICC efforts such that communication, recruitment and deployment will be much more efficient.
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SEER – Advocacy

- ICC and NCSEA have shared the planned collaboration with FEMA who responded by stating:

  “We are turning the page in finally getting the system to work for the benefit of impacted communities and the critical needs of building officials post-disaster.”

At this point FEMA is going to begin working with our organizations to determine how to engage our volunteers through the EMAC system.
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SEER – Advocacy

• NCSEA is working with the SEER Committee to deliver Cal OES and ICC training throughout the Country.
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SEER – Roster Management

• Compile and maintain a database of Structural Engineers as well as other design and construction professionals who are willing to assist with post-disaster condition assessments of structures at a Local, State or National level
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SEER – Assistance Coordination

• Coordinating and/or providing 2nd response assistance to AHJ’s and other stakeholders based on the roster
  • Local and State level – through the MO’s, and their State SEER Committees
  • National and International level – through NCSEA
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2017 SEER Response – Hurricane Harvey

**Hurricane Harvey: Event Summary**

On the 25th of August 2017, Hurricane Harvey made US landfall near Rockport, Texas as a Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 130 MPH. Within 48 hours, 53 NCSEA/SEER members from across the country volunteered to provide 2nd Responder assistance. Of those 53, 51 were actively deployed.
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2017 SEER Response – Hurricane Harvey

3 Requests Responded To
7 Municipalities/AHJs Supported
51 Responders Deployed
13,878 Structures Assessed
12 Days Deployed

*Interim Update 9-29-2017
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2017 SEER Response – Hurricane Irma

Hurricane Irma: Event Summary

On the 10th of September 2017, Hurricane Irma made US landfall in the Florida Keys as a Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 130 MPH. Within 48 hours, 84 NCSEA/SEER members from across the country volunteered to provide 2nd Responder assistance. Of those 84, 24 were actively deployed.
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2017 SEER Response – Hurricane Irma

3 Requests Responded To
4 Municipalities/AHJs Supported
24 Responders Deployed
5,032 Structures Assessed
12 Days Deployed

*Published 10-06-2017
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SEER – Regional Map
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SEER Regional Committee Members

Committee Co-Chairs:

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Insurance, Legal & Risk Management Issues Raised by Volunteer Work
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Inglorious Side of Volunteer Work
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RISKS OF VOLUNTEER WORK IN DISASTER AREAS

Not typical conditions
Lack of experience
Human trauma – Seeing hurt & dead victims
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RISKS OF VOLUNTEER WORK IN DISASTER AREAS

Lack of Time – to do usual high standard job
Lack of Resources – to do usual work
Lack of Sleep, Water, Food – not at your best
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RISKS OF VOLUNTEER WORK IN DISASTER AREAS

Lack of Access – to do usual high standard job
Unknown occurrences – wind, water
Unknown history, age of structure
Psychological Pressure – Family wants to return to home
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RISKS OF VOLUNTEER WORK IN DISASTER AREAS

Unknown local customs – not a resident

Unknown zoning laws
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

1. To Yourself/Injury/Death
2. Injuries and Death to Others
3. Lawsuit for Professional Services
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

1. To Yourself/Injury/Death

Wading in deep water, reptiles
Dust – World Trade Center
Electrical –
Unsafe Structures
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

1. To Yourself/Injury/Death

   Health Insurance – your own
   Workers’ Compensation – You, your employees
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

2. Injuries and Death to Others

People injured and/or killed by building collapse after return to building
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

2. Injuries and Death to Others

Errors & Omissions policy
Exclusions bodily injury
Exclusions for property damage
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

3. Lawsuit for Professional Services

Analyzed, rated building incorrectly
In normal circumstances, would have had different analysis
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

3. Lawsuit for Professional Services

Subsequent report after disaster over by other Structural Engineer and/or Contractor
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

3. Lawsuit for Professional Services

Not your client –
No prior relationship –
Client(s) lives destroyed –
Have nothing to lose
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

3. Lawsuit for Professional Services

Exclusions for work not done for fee
Exclusions for work done for federal, state or government agency
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Breakdown of Risks of Good Deeds:

3. Lawsuit for Professional Services

Affect premium –
Insurability -
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GOOD SAMARITAN LAWS & IMMUNITY STATUTES
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Federal statute and/or laws
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State by State:

Each state is different
Each law is different
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State by State:

Example: In Washington state, Samaritan Law applied to individual volunteer workers, but not to statewide organizations that train & coordinate volunteers
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Good Samaritan Law Issues –

Cannot protect you from wilful, intentional act – drunk?
Exceeded scope of duty or responsibilities
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Release signed by owner of property prior to inspection?
Not always practical or available - Subject to state laws interpretation
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STILL WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

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QUESTIONS?

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