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## **Free Resource to Help Citizens and Emergency Responders After a Major Earthquake Launched with Live Demonstration**

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**Los Angeles** - Councilmember Mitchell Englander, Chair of the Public Safety Committee, Dr. Lucy Jones of the U.S. Geological Survey, LAFD Fire Chief Brian Cummings, and American Red Cross Los Angeles Chief Communications Officer Theresa Corigliano held a press conference and demonstration of "OK/HELP," a valuable resource to help citizens and first responders after a major earthquake, which will be given out for free to 50,000 households in L.A.

OK/HELP is a window sign with clear, simple instructions provided by the Los Angeles Fire Department, American Red Cross, and the U.S. Geological Survey on what to do immediately after a major earthquake. After a major earthquake, the user tears off the sign and posts it in their front window indicating to emergency personnel, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) or neighbors if they are "OK" or need "HELP."

To see a graphic of the OK HELP sign online at <http://db.tt/wJra70QV>  
To see photos from the press conference and demonstration, visit <http://tiny.cc/OKHELPphotos>.

After the press conference, a live demonstration was staged showing how to use the OK/HELP sign. Several houses posted the sign up in their windows. The CERT volunteer team swept the street, checking the status of all of the houses. When they located the house that needed "HELP," they radioed the location to the Firefighters, who responded with a Fire Engine and simulated giving aid to the injured resident.

"Here in the San Fernando Valley, we're at the epicenter of major disasters, so we know it is not a question of IF, but WHEN the Big One will strike. Just like an earthquake survival kit, the OK/HELP sign should be in every home. Our partnership with the Fire Department, USGS, the Red Cross and the community in creating and distributing the OK/HELP sign to 50,000 homes in Los Angeles is a great example of how we all play a role in being prepared," said Councilmember Englander, whose 12th District includes Northridge, site of the devastating 1994 earthquake.

"Successful disaster preparedness begins with having a plan, and exercising it. The OK/HELP sign is a great step in toward being ready. LAFD is always there to help you learn about disaster planning at [www.lafd.org](http://www.lafd.org)," said LAFD Fire Chief Brian Cummings.

"Together, scientists, policy makers, emergency planners and community members share the goal of increasing our ability to survive and quickly recover from a major earthquake. With the Great ShakeOut coming up on Oct. 18, with millions of people participating and learning how to get prepared, it is a great time to launch a resource like the OK HELP sign. The community needs to be involved in preparedness, and knowing what to do in the immediate aftermath of a major quake is an important step," Dr. Lucy Jones of the U.S. Geological Survey.

"Studies show that being prepared is the most critical step in someone's ability to recover from a major disaster, but most local residents admit to being largely unprepared for emergency situations. That's why the American Red Cross is promoting PrepareSoCal - a public awareness campaign to create more resilient communities that

are better equipped to help each other prevent, prepare for and respond to life-threatening disasters. The Red Cross thanks Councilman Englander, the LAFD, and Dr. Jones today for helping to make communities Red Cross Ready," said Paul Schulz, American Red Cross Los Angeles Region CEO.

With the Great ShakeOut, the largest earthquake drill in history on Oct. 18, it is the perfect time to emphasize the crucial partnership between emergency planners and responders, policy makers, the Red Cross and the community in preparation, response and recovery from a major earthquake. Individuals and groups can register to participate online at [www.shakeout.org/california](http://www.shakeout.org/california) to Drop, Cover, and Hold On. After a major earthquake, the Fire Department will only be able to respond to the most urgent cases, so volunteer members of the CERT program will play an important role. The free CERT training program teaches community members how to render first aid, conduct basic search and rescue and assist first responders after a disaster.

Councilmember Englander, the LAFD and the Red Cross will be engaging Neighborhood Councils, CERT Teams, Neighborhood Watch groups, and other community based organizations to help distribute the 50,000 free OK/HELP signs. It will be mailed to homes, handed out at community meetings, available to pick up at LAFD Fire Stations, handed out door to door, and can be ordered online at [www.CD12.org](http://www.CD12.org).

Red Cross also plays a critical role after earthquakes. In partnership with other agencies, they provide for the urgent needs of disaster victims, including safe shelter, food for victims and emergency workers, mental health and emotional support services, first aid and health services, and distributing emergency relief supplies. They also offer a free American Red Cross Earthquake App for mobile devices. Download it as part of getting prepared, and after an earthquake, tap the "I'm Safe" button and it will post a message on all your social media networks letting friends and loved ones know you are safe.

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