



## Why the AIA Participates in Disaster Preparedness and Response

- Nation-wide, one minor disaster occurs in a week, and at least 10 major disasters occur a year.
  - Historically, there is a plethora of volunteers willing to respond but no established means to utilize them as a resource.
  - Historically, volunteer structural and other engineers were often called to respond to disasters, however to speed recovery they should be reserved for detailed assessments. An architect, as an individual responder, is uniquely qualified to evaluate the safety of a site and structure. Architects are natural problem-solvers and planners, ideally suited for the complex situations brought on by a disaster
  - Because there is a need and a desire: In some emergencies, there is a deficit of responders from the jurisdiction to perform rapid building damage assessments for safety. Volunteer architects respond to calls from jurisdictions and public agencies.
  - Volunteer architects are often precluded from participating in disaster response when they have not already established a connection with the disaster response network within the jurisdiction. Establishing a coordinated network for response and communications prior to the disaster is critical. Established state coordinators become familiar with local resources supporting a disaster response effort and have local knowledge pertaining to the disaster.
  - Advanced building assessment training allows for immediate deployment of volunteer architects and saves valuable response time.
1. Disaster training establishes the architect as a leader in emergency response with his/her family, place of business, neighborhood, and other states.
  2. The architecture license requires a commitment to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
  3. It is our civic duty to contribute our unique skills to the health, safety, and welfare of our community. Awareness of the risk makes us responsible to communicate the message and respond with our capabilities.
  4. In states with less ongoing risk, states may be forced to utilize outside assistance in lieu of a trained and localized state coordination effort.
  5. Business continuity: Implementing a response plan helps to facilitate quick renewed operation of architecture firms/AIA components following a disaster.
  6. Understand and facilitate methodologies for permitting and streamlining reconstruction projects essential to recovery.
  7. Learned mitigation techniques are a unique asset to clients in both everyday design and in reconstruction. The potential for future professional business is enabled through pre-existing relationships.
  8. Architects as leaders in emergency response, positions them well in the community for contributions to redesign and reconstruction.