



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

March 25, 2014

## **British Columbians at Risk if Catastrophic Earthquake Occurs**

VICTORIA – Auditor General Russ Jones’ latest report, *Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness*, states that British Columbians are at significant risk if a catastrophic earthquake were to occur today.

The audit found that Emergency Management BC (EMBC), the organization tasked with preparing government’s response to such an event, is not adequately prepared for a catastrophic earthquake. The audit also found that neither the Province nor EMBC has made preparing for one a priority.

The Office reached similar conclusions in its 1997 report on emergency management. Over the last 17 years, EMBC has not made significant progress. The report outlines numerous areas for improvement in EMBC’s preparedness from risk analysis, plans and procedures and integration of stakeholders, to training and public education.

“Successive governments have decided to allocate scarce public resources to meet more immediate pressing demands, rather than to adequately prepare the province for a catastrophic earthquake that may or may not occur,” explains Jones. “EMBC’s current operating budget for emergency activities is approximately the same as it was in 2006. In addition, EMBC staff is busy with daily emergencies such as floods and fires so catastrophic earthquake planning is done as a side-of-desk activity.”

The report also highlights the need for EMBC to report publically on its level of preparedness so British Columbians can understand the extent of their vulnerability and make informed decisions as to their own level of readiness.

“British Columbians need to take responsibility and prepare for a catastrophic earthquake to protect themselves and their families,” says Jones. Jones identified that preparing for such an event is a shared responsibility, and urges everyone to look at their own situation and ask themselves whether they are ready.

EMBC appears to have taken the report quite seriously and is working to develop and implement strategies to address the deficiencies noted in this report.

The full report is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at [Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness \(www.bcauditor.com/pubs\)](http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs). Auditor General Russ Jones will answer questions pertaining to the report via a news conference and in-person should a visual be required after the news conference.



OFFICE OF THE  
**Auditor General**  
of British Columbia

*News Conference Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014*

*Time: 1 p.m. (Pacific time)*

*Dial-in Information:*

*From Vancouver: 604 681-0260*

*From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1 877 353-9184*

*Participant Pass Code: 44848#*

*During question and answer period, to ask a question: Press 01*

*During question and answer period, to exit the question queue: Press #*

**About the Office of the Auditor General of BC**

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General and staff (known as the Office of the Auditor General or OAG) to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

Catastrophic Earthquake Preparedness - [www.bcauditor.com/pubs](http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs)

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