



Earthquake Protection Measures for People with Disabilities

C. Gountromichou, A. Kourou, and P. Kerpelis

Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization of Greece, Athens, Greece (cgountro@oasp.gr/210-6779561))

The problem of seismic safety for people with disabilities not only exists but is also urgent and of primary importance. Working towards disability equality, Earthquake Planning and Protection Organization of Greece (E.P.P.O.) has developed an educational scheme for people with disabilities in order to guide them to develop skills to protect themselves as well as to take the appropriate safety measures before, during and after an earthquake. The framework of this initiative includes a number of actions have been already undertaken, including the following:

a. Recently, the main guidelines have been published to help people who have physical, cognitive, visual, or auditory disabilities to cope with a destructive earthquake.

Of great importance, in case of people with disabilities, is to be prepared for the disaster, with several measures that must be taken starting today. In the pre-earthquake period, it is important that these people, in addition to other measures, do the following:

- Create a Personal Support Network

The Personal Support Network should be a group of at least three trustful people that can assist the disabled person to prepare for a disastrous event and to recover after it.

- Complete a Personal Assessment

The environment may change after a destructive earthquake. People with disabilities are encouraged to make a list of their personal needs and their resources for meeting them in a disaster environment.

b. Lectures and training seminars on earthquake protection are given for students, teachers and educators in Special Schools for disabled people, mainly for informing and familiarizing them with earthquakes and with safety measures.

c. Many earthquake drills have already taken place, for each disability, in order to share good practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction and to identify gaps and challenges.

The final aim of this action is all people with disabilities to be well informed and motivated towards a culture of earthquake resilience, since Greece is one of the most seismically active countries of the world.