

**Handout 10.1: Classroom Discussion Exercise 10.1**

The instructor is encouraged to involve the students in discussion on key issues throughout the lecture. Discussion questions that the instructor might ask near the beginning of the lecture are included on the following page. The questions are designed to inspire thinking and foster a better appreciation of the lessons to be learned on this topic.

**Handout 10.1: Classroom Discussion Exercise**

1. Would it be less difficult to get people in an area like South Carolina (which is quite susceptible to earthquakes) or California to prepare for earthquakes? Why? Also, what about between southern California and western Washington? Explain why you think so in both cases.
2. How much difference does preparedness really make? Is it really important? Why?
3. How does earthquake preparedness specifically differ from other hazard preparedness, such as terrorism or hurricanes? Here the instructor should refer back to Section 7 – Nature and Effects of Earthquakes and other relevant sections that discuss the nature of earthquake hazards and how they are different (no warning, affected region typically widespread, above and below-ground structures and lifelines damaged, cascading effects such as fire, etc.).

### Handout 10.1: Classroom Discussion Exercise (Answers)

1. Would it be less difficult to get people in an area like South Carolina (which is quite susceptible to earthquakes) or California to prepare for earthquakes? Why? Also, what about between southern California and western Washington? Explain why you think so in both cases.

**Answer:** The perception of the earthquake threat in South Carolina is less because people do not feel earthquakes as frequently in that region. It is clear that **risk perception, defined as the perceived likelihood of personal property damage and personal injury, is an important factor in determining whether an individual or entity will prepare.** Also, there is less chance that people in South Carolina will have had prior experience with these events, which also lessens the likelihood of preparing. However, these are not the only factors involved. Even in earthquake-prone regions, many people still do not “personalize” the disaster – they instead tend to “socialize” disasters – even when they are aware of the hazard. That is, they tend not to think they will be affected even though they may be in harm’s way, and it is the people around them they consider potential disaster victims. Importantly, one of the primary factors that determine preparation is **hazard intrusion.** Hazard intrusion refers to how frequently and intrusively the threat of a disaster is presented and communicated to an individual or group. Thus, in many disaster-prone regions where this is absent, people do not prepare much more than those in less prone regions. This underscores the need for **continual education and communication to the public and relevant groups,** even in cases where the threat is generally recognized and/or personalized, is perhaps a major factors.

The comparison with western Washington and southern California would be similar to that for South Carolina and Southern California.

2. How much difference does preparedness really make? Is it really important? Why?

**Answer:** Contrary to conventional thinking, research findings are not yet sufficient to prove that disaster preparedness has a big positive impact.

3. How does earthquake preparedness specifically differ from other hazard preparedness, such as terrorism or hurricanes?

**Answer:** Here the instructor should refer back to Session 7 – Nature and Effects of Earthquakes, and other relevant sections that discuss the nature of earthquake hazards and how they are different. Earthquakes generally occur with no warning, the affected region typically is widespread, above and below-ground structures and lifelines typically are damaged, and they are “cascading-type” disasters where the secondary effects, such as fire, can pose an equal or greater hazard than the

ground shaking (i.e., the fires that burned much of the city of San Francisco in 1906 were perhaps more devastating than the earthquake itself).