



**CHINA**



## **Ministry of Civil Affairs**

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### **1. Legislation:**

Disaster management, including disaster prevention, reduction and relief, has been incorporated into the overall economic and social development plans of the central and regional governments. The disaster management strategy of the state emphasizes prevention and combines prevention with relief, and the principle for relief work of the state emphasizes reliance on the masses and collectives, self-help production, mutual help and necessary state relief and support. This strategy and principle have become an important guiding principle for the governments at all levels to carry out disaster management.

In the meantime, China has promulgated and implemented more than 30 laws and regulations concerning disaster reduction, as a result, a legal system for China's disaster management is gradually perfecting.

In particular, the promulgation of *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Water and Soil Conservation*, *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Earthquake Prevention and Disaster Reduction*, *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Fire Fighting*, *the Law of the People's Republic of China on Flood Prevention*, and *the Meteorology Law of the People's Republic of China* has improved its disaster management and greatly enhanced the roles of the legal systems in disaster management. In addition, various regions are also working hard to formulate or improve their own regulations and emergency response plans for disaster management in keeping with the unified requirements of the State Council.

## ***2. Regulation and procedure:***

China's natural disaster management system is made up of the unified leadership of the government, separate responsibility of different department and management at different levels.

In the course of disaster management, the central government controls the overall situation and exercise overall leadership; the regional governments at various levels exercise unified leadership and the relevant departments perform their functions with respective jurisdictions. While the system emphasizes the regional governments should work as the subjects of disaster management, it also stresses the commando roles performed by the members of the People's Liberation Army, the Armed Police, the Public Security Forces and Militia Reserves.

With regard to China's integrated coordination mechanism for disaster management, the State Council exercises unified leadership and has the China International Disaster Reduction Committee, the National Office for Overall Disaster Control and Relief Coordination and other agencies under its control. They are in charge of studying and formulating the principles, policies and plans for national disaster reduction, coordinating and conducting major disaster reduction activities, guiding regional governments to conduct disaster reduction work, promoting international exchanges and cooperation in disaster reduction, organizing and coordinating national disaster and relief work, and exercising coordination and organization in disaster management. These national coordination agencies provide decision-making services for the central government in disaster management and ensure the timely implementation in various sectors of the decisions of the central government on disaster management.

While a standard coordination and operation mechanism is established at the national level, all the central and regional governments have specific departments to be in charge of disaster management. All these departments must perform their respective duties and cooperate closely, thus forming a working network for disaster management. The staff, funds and materials of the relevant departments together provide a solid guarantee for disaster management.

## ***3. Organisation:***

### ***3.1 The natural disaster early warning and forecasting system***

In keeping with laws of disaster management, China further strengthened its work of disaster early warning and forecasting and established a preliminary working system. In the area of establishing a disaster early warning and forecasting system, a national meteorological monitoring and forecasting network has been formed for meteorological disaster monitoring and forecasting, which comprises 251 earth meteorological observatories, 124 high-altitude exploratory stations, more than 80 new-generation meteorological radar stations.

The seismological monitoring and forecasting system comprises the national digital seismic network made up of 48 seismological stations, 23 provincial regional digital remote seismological monitoring stations, 25 GPS base stations for continuous observation, 56 crustal movement observation networks made up of about 1,000 mobile observatories, and the seismic warning signs observation network made up of more than 400 stations.

The national hydraulic monitoring network comprises 3,130 basic hydrologic stations, 1,073 water-level stations, 14,454 rainfall stations, 74 experimental stations and 11620 ground-water monitoring wells. China has 2,867 forest epidemic control and quarantine stations at various levels across the country. In preventing forest fires, China has 3,151 forest fire command posts, 11,222 forest fire observatories, 300,000 kilometers of fire prevention highways, 1.03 million kilometers of fire lanes. As a result, a national monitoring and forecasting network has been established for forest fire and disease prevention. The national crop and forest disease monitoring and forecasting system comprises a national crop disease monitoring and forecasting network made up of more than 400 regional stations, 15 disease monitoring centers and a national major crop disease monitoring network made up of 300 regional stations.

### 3.2 The emergency relief mechanism for natural disasters

In order to comprehensively increase the emergency relief capacities for all types of extremely serious natural disasters, the Ministry of Civil Affairs has in recent years promoted the establishment of a national planning system for emergency disaster relief. At present, a total of 17 provinces (autonomous regions and centrally-controlled municipalities) have formulated and promulgated their emergency disaster relief plans and 80 percent of the prefecture and county governments also worked their plans. As a result, a national planning system for emergency disaster relief and a national mechanism for emergency relief response are largely in place.

In 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs promulgated the Working Rules of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Response to Unexpected Natural Disasters. In light of the seriousness of disasters, the document classifies the response of the central government to unexpected natural disasters into four grades and defined the specific working measures for disaster response at various levels, thus incorporating the work of disaster relief into a standard management process for disaster relief.

When a specific province (autonomous region and centrally-controlled municipality) encounters meteorological disasters such as flood, drought, typhoon, hailstorm, snowstorm and dust storm, geological disasters such as hill collapse, landside and mudflow, marine disasters such as windstorm tide and tsunami, forest and prairie fires, major biological disasters, an accidental disaster, a public health incident, a social security incident or other unexpected natural disasters or public incident, which has caused human casualties and needs emergency resettlement or living relief, the Ministry of Civil Affairs will reactivate the corresponding response grades a corresponding response plan will also be reactivated.

After the disaster response mechanism is reactivated, the Ministry of Civil Affairs will implement the following main disaster response measures:

- 1) Immediately collect, evaluate and get information about the disaster and make public the information about the disaster and about disaster control and relief;
- 2) Immediately notify the relevant departments of the disaster and the progress of relief work and coordinate and implement the support measures of the central government for disaster control and relief in the affected area;
- 3) Immediately dispatch working groups to the affected area to guide the regional governments in disaster relief and supervise the regional government in implementing the disaster relief measures;
- 4) Immediately allocate emergency relief funds and materials to the affected areas;
- 5) Launch relief donations in an appropriate time to mobilize social forces for disaster relief;
- 6) Make proper arrangements for the basic life of the affected people or resettle them in other places and offer timely guidance to regional governments in reconstruction efforts.

The establishment of the above disaster response mechanism can guarantee that once a disaster occurs, the emergency response for disaster management will be immediately reactivated. The relief personnel, funds and materials can arrive in the affected areas in the shortest possible time and can ensure that the victims can receive relief and help within 24 hours after the occurrence of a disaster. In 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs reactivated grade I disaster response on July 21 to cope with the floods that struck the basins of the Huaihe River and the Weihe River. Throughout the year, various response grades were reactivated 14 times for a total length of more than four months.

### 3.3 A disaster relief materials reserve system has been preliminarily established

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Finance began establishing a disaster relief materials reserve system at the central level in 1998. So far, central disaster relief materials reserve depots have been established in the 10 cities of Shenyang, Harbin, Tianjin, Zhenzhou, Hefei, Wuhan, Changsha, Nanning, Chengdu and Xi'an. Some regional disaster relief materials reserve depots have also been established in some regions prone to disasters. As a result, a disaster relief materials reserve network has been largely in place, based mainly on the disaster relief materials depots. By the end of 2003, the central reserve depots had reserved and allocated 271,000 tents. In 2003 alone, 52 batches of tents totaling 130,000 tents were allocated for emergency relief efforts.

## ***4. The Countermeasures for China's Disaster Management***

1) Conduct education to heighten the public awareness of disaster reduction. The whole society must know disasters, understand disasters, prevent disasters and stay

away from disasters. Media institutions, public good, cultural performances and other methods should be employed to publicize the importance of disaster reduction and to launch other related social activities. Disaster reduction education should go into primary and secondary schools, specialized disaster reduction education should be offered at different levels, and in particular, government workers should enhance their awareness of disaster reduction and their competence of disaster management.

2) Establish and improve the legal system for disaster management. The legal system for disaster reduction and disaster relief should be improved. In particular, it is imperative to enact *the Disaster Relief Law*, so as to clearly define the rights and obligations of the government, the society and the victims, standardize government behaviors in disaster management and strengthen supervision over disaster management. This will standardize, systemize and institutionalize the relief work in natural disasters and incorporate disaster management and disaster relief into the overall plan for social and economic development.

3) Further improve the disaster management system highlighting the unified leadership of the government and the separate responsibility of different departments and improve the operating mechanism for disaster management. The current priority is to further consolidate the management system that emphasizes the graded responsibilities for the central and regional governments, further standardize and institutionalize this system as soon as possible, work out the supporting systems and procedures for the operation of disaster emergency response management, specify the disaster relief responsibilities for the central government, regional governments and various departments in charge of disaster management, and ensure the disaster management system is implemented. With regard to the operating mechanism for disaster management, it is imperative to further improve the emergency response mechanism, the coordination mechanism, the social mobilization mechanism, the information-sharing mechanism and the supervisory mechanism.

4) Further improve the emergency response planning system for natural disasters. It is imperative to further speed up the pace of formulating the departmental plans for disaster management, improve the dovetailing of departmental plans and form a national planning system for natural disasters. On the basis of formulating and improving these plans, regular and easy exercises should be carried out to enable the relevant personnel can truly act according to the plans.

5) Strengthen the building of a disaster information system in an all-round way to improve disaster monitoring, warning and forecast. It is imperative to continue the building of a disaster information system, strengthen inter-departmental sharing of the information about disaster management and establish an integrated evaluation mechanism for disaster risks. The launching of mini-satellites for environment and disaster monitoring and forecasting will be taken as an important opportunity to improve the early warning and forecasting of possible disasters by utilizing modern technical monitoring tools. It is also imperative to improve the collection, analysis and treatment of disaster-related information and form an information-sharing platform for disaster management so that accurate information can be provided for rapid decision

making and for the reactivation of the emergency response mechanism for disaster relief.

6) Further increase the response capacities for major natural disasters. In order to increase their disaster response capacities, the governments at all levels must adopt further measures to improve their emergency response management mechanisms, strengthen the construction of their equipment and capacities for disaster management, provide necessary transportation, communications and other equipment for disaster management, intensify the training for the disaster management personnel so as to truly improve the capacities and competence of disaster emergency relief.

7) Establish a standard working system for post-disaster reconstruction. Post-disaster reconstruction constitutes the continuation of relief work and is a system project. It is both a basic restoration of the destroyed homelands and also a new growth point of economic development. Reconstruction must be organized and carried out in accordance with the principles of sound planning, scientific approach and respect for victims' wishes under the unified leadership of the governments of the affected regions. It is also imperative to further strengthen reconstruction administration and incorporate reconstruction into standard project management.

## **Mr. Kang Peng**

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