



Partners in Prevention

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Ready Business Workshops in Puerto Rico Highlighted Earthquake and Power Outage Just One Month Prior to Hurricane Maria

Nearly 200 representatives of Puerto Rican businesses, emergency communities, jurisdictions, and nonprofits gathered for [*Ready Business QuakeSmart & Power Outage Preparedness Workshops*](#) on August 8 in San Juan and on August 10 in Mayaguez. FEMA and FLASH joined local organizers to present the workshops just one month prior to Hurricane Maria. The focus was on the territory's continuous seismic activity and disruption from recent power outages.

According to seismologist Dr. Elizabeth A. Vanacore of the Puerto Rico Seismic Network at University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez, the territory experienced 3,949 seismic events during 2016. Compounding the threat, Puerto Rico suffered its worst power blackout in 30 years on September 21, 2016. Mr. Wisbel Ayala, Executive Officer for the Planning Area of the PR Emergency Management Agency, presented during the workshops detailing how the 2016 outage interrupted \$400 million in daily production of commercial activity and took 48 hours to re-establish service to only 70% of utility clients.

The Ready Business workshops drew a high level of turnout and participant engagement demonstrated how local businesses understand the threats as well as the value of Ready Business information.

"Based on the information received, I will start a plan with my employees and my family," said one participant. Another, when asked if the tools provided in the workshop were helpful in identifying risk, developing a plan, and acting to perform mitigation said, "Yes, the talk was effective and made me reflect on where I am and where I am going."

The San Juan and Mayaguez *QuakeSmart & Power Outage Ready Business Workshops* presenting partners included FEMA, FLASH, the Puerto Rico Seismic Network, the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency, and Legacy Partner Simpson-Strong Tie.

Editor's note: FLASH sincerely hopes that the business owners and citizens of Puerto Rico found the Power Outage toolkits and workshops helpful ahead of Hurricanes Irma and Maria as well as during the long recovery ahead. We stand ready to support them in their time of need and until they come back even stronger than before.