

AGENDA
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 5, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Media Center Room, Emergency Operations Center
500 E. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

- I. Call to Order, Introductions, Approval of Minutes**
- II. Subcommittee Reports and Planning Teams**
 - Budget – Bruce Aoki
 - Community Preparedness – Larry Meyerhofer
 - Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs – Carol Parks
 - Human Resources – Bobbi Jacobsen
 - Local Hazard Mitigation Planning – Carol Parks
 - Operations – Rob Freeman
 - Planning – Michelle Riebeling
 - Shelter and Welfare – Jimmy Kim
 - Training / Exercises – Crystal Chambers
 - Others
- III. NotifyLA – Chris Ipsen**
- IV. 2016 Emergency Management Workshop – Rob Freeman**
- V. City of Los Angeles 2016 Public Information Officer Table Top Exercise After Action Report/Improvement Plan – Rob Freeman**
- VI. Old / New Business**
- VII. Adjournment**

EMC meeting information is available on the Emergency Management Department website at <http://emergency.lacity.org/> - Click on Emergency Operations Organization, then EMC. If you would like to be added to the EMC email distribution list, please subscribe via this link <http://emergency.lacity.org/ABOUTEMD/Subscription/index.htm>.

Upon request, sign language interpretation, real-time translation services, agenda materials in alternative formats, and other accommodations are available to the public for City-sponsored meetings and events. All requests for reasonable accommodations must be made at least three working days (72-hours) in advance of the scheduled meeting date. For additional information, contact the Emergency Management Department at (213) 484-4800.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE



Date: September 19, 2016

To: Anna Burton, Emergency Management Committee Chair
Emergency Management Committee Members

From: Rob Freeman, Operations Division Chief
Emergency Management Department

Subject: **CITY OF LOS ANGELES 2016 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER TABLE TOP EXERCISE AFTER ACTION REPORT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Recommendation

That the Emergency Management Committee (EMC) approve the attached City of Los Angeles 2016 Public Information Officer (PIO) Table Top Exercise (TTX) After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) and forward it to the Emergency Operations Board (EOB) for approval.

Summary

On July 21, 2016, the City of Los Angeles conducted Operation Mic Drop: a Public Information Officer Table Top Exercise. This exercise was designed and developed at the request of the Emergency Management Department (EMD) Communications Division. Citing the need for improved Joint Information Center (JIC) operations and clearer processes for the PIO function in the Emergency Operations Center, the City PIOs were convened to exercise their role in a major incident with City-wide impacts.

This exercise was developed with input from six different City departments through the exercise design team (EDT). The EDT determined that the best initial test of PIO functions during a major incident would be through a TTX, and decided upon a windstorm with cascading impacts as the scenario so as to be able to include PIOs from a broad selection of City departments.

The exercise itself had 16 players from eight different departments, with eight exercise staff members and five observers. Two modules took players through numerous questions intended to spark discussion and determine roles, responsibilities, and processes for a City of Los Angeles JIC. Several strengths and areas for improvement were identified. The AAR/IP analyzes exercise results, identifies strengths to be maintained and built upon, identifies potential areas for further improvement, and supports development of corrective actions.

Attachment – City of Los Angeles 2016 Operation Mic Drop Public Information Officer Table Top Exercise After Action Report/Improvement Plan

**Operation Mic Drop
Communications Table Top Exercise
July 21, 2015
After Action Report/Improvement Plan
September 2016**

City of Los Angeles
Emergency Management Department



EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	Operation Mic Drop: Communications Table Top Exercise
Exercise Dates	July 21, 2016 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Scope	This exercise was a three hour table top exercise at the City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), 500 E. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Exercise play was limited to City of Los Angeles Public Information Officers or those who would act in a public information capacity during an EOC activation, or who would staff a City Joint Information Center (JIC).
Mission Area(s)	Response
Core Capabilities	Public Information and Warning
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the Emergency Public Information Annex, including the organization of a Joint Information Center and the process of messaging approval in the Emergency Operations Center. 2. Adequately provide emergency information to the public, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, before, during, and after an incident. 3. Demonstrate the process used to identify public information needs of the affected area and methods of disseminating information during an incident.
Threat or Hazard	A major windstorm with cascading effects.
Scenario	A major windstorm in July 2016 has caused significant impacts throughout the City, including power outages for 110,000 people in the Valley, wildfires in both Griffith Park and Temescal Canyon/Will Rogers parks, and is impacting the ability of airplanes to land at airports. It is anticipated that wind gusts of up to 45 miles per hour will continue for the next 36 hours, while temperatures will peak at a high of 105 in the Valley, and only cool to 94 overnight. Mandatory evacuations have been ordered in association with the wildfires. It is anticipated that power will not be fully restored for at least three days.

Sponsor

This exercise is sponsored and conducted by the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, in conjunction with participating organizations.

Participating Organizations

This exercise was being conducted at the local level, and involved participants from the City of Los Angeles

- Office of the Mayor
- Emergency Management Department
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Department of Water and Power
- Los Angeles World Airports
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Recreation and Parks
- Department of Public Works
- Department on Disability

As well as participants from the County of Los Angeles Office of Emergency Management.

Point of Contact

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 21, 2016, the City of Los Angeles conducted Operation Mic Drop: a Public Information Officer (PIO) Table Top Exercise (TTX). This exercise was designed and developed at the request of the Emergency Management Department (EMD) Communications Division. Citing the need for improved Joint Information Center (JIC) operations and clearer processes for the PIO function in the Emergency Operations Center, the City PIOs were convened to exercise their role in a major incident with City-wide impacts.

This exercise was developed with input from six different City departments through the exercise design team (EDT). The EDT determined that the best initial test of PIO functions during a major incident would be through a TTX, and decided upon a windstorm with cascading impacts as the scenario so as to be able to include PIOs from a broad selection of City departments.

The exercise itself had 16 players from eight different departments, with eight exercise staff members and five observers. Two modules took players through numerous questions intended to spark discussion and determine roles, responsibilities, and processes for a City of Los Angeles JIC. Several strengths and areas for improvement were identified. The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Participants quickly identified and set appropriate priorities given the situation, and accurately recognized the first steps that would need to be taken by PIOs responding to the EOC.
- Players understood the importance of rapidly disseminating accurate information to the public, and were cognizant of the need for aggressive social media use during this type of incident.
- Players related that the exercise was an excellent opportunity to bring PIOs together and that the conversations were extremely useful in clarifying response roles.

Participants were engaged throughout the exercise, and understood that they would be a vital conduit between the EOC and the public. Players also knew that they could also serve as a conduit for information between their departments and the JIC. Participants were very adaptable, and very quickly found ways to work around gaps, weaknesses, and unknowns.

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- The need to develop a JIC plan, or JIC guidelines, including descriptions of roles and responsibilities and a scalable organization structure.
- The need to develop a social media/digital plan for incidents of all sizes.
- PIOs should regularly meet to discuss roles and responsibilities both during incidents and in steady-state circumstances.

The exercise showed gaps in documentation and understanding of PIO functions within the EOC, as well as how a JIC would be structured and organized. Additionally, the approval process for messaging, and how this approval process may vary based on the type and scope of an incident, was unclear to players involved and will require more clarity in future plans or guidelines developed. Participants showed an interest in potentially developing 'boilerplate' or pre-scripted language specific to certain hazards of incidents. Participants recognized these gaps and expressed interest in more robust guidelines and training surrounding the PIO role in the EOC.

Overall, Operation Mic Drop was an extremely successful exercise, in that it brought together players with integral public messaging roles and responsibilities to discuss key issues following a major incident or disaster. A number of areas for improvement were identified, however the exercise showed a high level of engagement and enthusiasm in City PIOs that will serve the City well in improving capabilities.

EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

This exercise was developed in response to requests from the Emergency Management Department – Communications Division following several exercises and real-world incidents that highlighted the need for greater understanding of the PIO function in the EOC and the need for PIOs to be able to better respond to incidents that may impact multiple departments across the City.

The Exercise Design Team met three times ahead of the exercise to determine objectives and participation. The EDT selected the following objectives to be tested in the exercise:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the Emergency Public Information Annex, including the organization of a Joint Information Center and the process of messaging approval in the Emergency Operations Center.
2. Adequately provide emergency information to the public, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, before, during, and after an incident.
3. Demonstrate the process used to identify public information needs of the affected area and methods of disseminating information during an incident.

Scenario Summary

To adequately test the objectives and to spur participation from a large number of City departments (ultimately eight departments were represented as players in the exercise), a wind storm with cascading impacts across the City was used. The exercise was divided into two modules, with the first module occurring the morning of the wind storm, and the second module simulating the afternoon of a wind storm where cascading effects have increased. Impacts of the wind storm included fires, power outages, fatalities, and major travel impacts by both land and sea.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate an understanding of the Emergency Public Information Annex, including the organization of a Joint Information Center and the process of messaging approval in the Emergency Operations Center.

Many participants expressed that they were unfamiliar with or had not read the Emergency Public Information Annex. However many participants expressed that they were familiar with the concept of a Joint Information Center and its usefulness following a major incident or disaster. Some participants were aware that the EPI Annex states that all messaging must be approved by the EOC Director, and expressed that usually the EOC Director will defer to the Lead PIO to approve all messaging. The exercise showed that there should be greater awareness of the EPI Annex and the nature of a JIC as established within the EOC. Several areas for improvement were identified, as detailed in the Improvement Plan.

Adequately provide emergency information to the public, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, before, during, and after an incident

Players were quick to identify that messaging should be transmitted and distributed quickly through multiple means, including both traditional and social media, as well as other sources (311, NotifyLA, bullhorns, door-to-door in evacuation areas, etc.). All participating PIOs took seriously the role of public information before and during major incidents, and understood the importance of keeping the public informed as constantly as possible. Players vocalized the importance of ensuring messaging was accessible, though the processes for ensuring accessibility were unclear to many participants. Players also quickly identified the need to request Spanish and American Sign Language translators for the JIC. It was unclear what the process would be for requesting translators to assist with messaging in languages other than American Sign Language. Several areas for improvement were identified, as detailed in the Improvement Plan.

Demonstrate the process used to identify public information needs of the affected area and methods of disseminating information during an incident.

Players demonstrated great knowledge and understanding of the public information needs during incidents of the type reflected in the scenario. Players worked together to identify these information needs and stated who they would get that information from. Players also recognized multiple means by which this information could be disseminated to the public rapidly. There were, however, some indications that players may over-rely on EOC responders giving information to PIOs, rather than PIOs proactively seeking out the specific information they need from appropriate EOC responders. Improvement of PIOs understanding of EOC operations and positions was identified as a need, as well as the need to brief EOC responders and particular EOC positions on what information they should push to PIOs. Other areas for improvement were also identified, as detailed in the Improvement Plan.

CONCLUSION

Operation Mic Drop was a useful exercise that showed great collaboration between PIOs and fostered a greater awareness and understanding of public information processes when the City's EOC is activated. Participating PIOs proved themselves to be knowledgeable about public information needs, concerns, and priorities during a major incident, and were quick to recognize areas for improvement and identify ways to enhance understanding and capabilities. Noted areas for improvement are detailed in the Improvement Plan, and will help to improve Los Angeles's ability to communicate with and inform the public before, during, and after a major incident.

The Emergency Management Department thanks City departments and personnel who contributed to this exercise through the Exercise Planning Team, or as Controllers, Evaluators, or Players during the exercise.

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APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Objective	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Priority	Primary Responsible Organization	Responsible Unit/Division /Personnel	Start Date	Completion Date
Objective 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the Emergency Public Information Annex, including the organization of a Joint Information Center and the process of messaging approval in the Emergency Operations Center.	There is a need for better-established guidelines and organization of PIO function and JIC roles and responsibilities.	Develop a JIC structure and/or organization chart that can be scalable for all incident sizes.	Organization	High	EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	December 2016
		Develop position descriptions and/or position checklists for PIO functions/positions in the EOC.	Organization	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	June 2017
		Develop a Joint Information Center plan or policies/procedures guidance document. This document shall include guidelines on when a JIC structure will be used and how consistent messaging will be coordinated. The policies/procedures should also detail how PIOs coordinate when an incident occurs but the	Planning, Organization	High	EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	June 2017

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

Objective	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Priority	Primary Responsible Organization	Responsible Unit/Division /Personnel	Start Date	Completion Date
		JIC is not activated.						
	There is a need for better-established guidelines and organization of PIO function and JIC roles and responsibilities.	Develop a City-wide PIO roster, including all personnel with PIO functions, not exclusively those who may respond to the EOC.	Planning	High	Officer of the Mayor	Communications	August 2016	October 2016
		Determine capacity for and schedule regular City PIO meetings or trainings in order to foster relationships. Continue to have exercises specifically for PIOs.	Planning, Exercise	Medium	Office of the Mayor/EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	Ongoing
		Determine role of Office of the Mayor within the JIC.	Organization	Medium	Officer of the Mayor/EMD	Communications	October 2016	June 2017
		Develop out information regarding 'virtual JIC' coordination; for example, how a JIC would be coordinated if a physical JIC location was not established.	Organization	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	March 2017
		Develop guidelines on what type of information each department may be expected to contribute to the PIO function in the EOC.	Organization, Planning	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	September 2016	June 2017
		Establish recommendations for who can/cannot talk to	Organization, Planning	Low	Office of the Mayor	Communications	October 2016	June 2017

Objective	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Priority	Primary Responsible Organization	Responsible Unit/Division /Personnel	Start Date	Completion Date
		the media, both in steady-state operations and during an incident or emergency.						
		Develop a schedule template or basic guidelines outlining the timeline of PIO activities, including meetings, updates, press releases, etc.	Organization, Planning	Low	EMD	Communications Division	January 2017	June 2017
	There is a need for greater understanding of PIO and JIC functions in the EOC	Identify applicable or relevant trainings for PIOs who may be assigned to the EOC, and work with EMD Training & Exercises Unit to schedule and advertise these trainings.	Training	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	August 2016	Ongoing
		Develop and host a specific EOC training directed at PIOs. Host regularly so as to train newly hired PIOs.	Training	Medium	EMD	Communications Division / Operations Division	October 2016	April 2017
		Identify opportunities to train with or exercise with the LA County JIC.	Training	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	August 2016	Ongoing
Objective 2: Adequately provide emergency information to	There is a need to use all available means to amplify public messaging during a major incident.	Identify means with which to quickly translate public messages into different languages with minimal advanced notice.	Organization, Equipment	Medium	EMD	Communications Division	June 2017	June 2018

Objective	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Priority	Primary Responsible Organization	Responsible Unit/Division /Personnel	Start Date	Completion Date
the public, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, before, during, and after an incident.		Develop a glossary of key emergency management/disaster terms translated into other languages.	Organization, Planning	Low	EMD	Communications Division	January 2017	June 2017
		Identify ways to coordinate public messaging with elected officials in LA (i.e. City Council members).	Organization, Planning	Low	Office of the Mayor	Communications	September 2016	June 2017
	There is room for improvement in PIOs level of comfort with ensuring all messaging is accessible.	Determine ways in which PIOs can be trained on DAFN issues related to public information and identify training opportunities for PIOs so that there is a redundancy in capabilities.	Training	Medium	EMD/DoD	Communications	November 2016	March 2017
	The City can enhance PIO function capabilities and collaboration so as to enhance response capabilities in a major incident.	Develop City-wide social media/digital policy during incidents/emergencies/E OC activations.	Planning, Organization	Medium	Office of the Mayor/EMD	Communications	August 2016	June 2017
		Determine the number of PIOs each department should have capable of fulfilling PIO functions in the EOC or JIC following a disaster.	Organization, Planning	Low	EMD	Communications Division / Operations Division	August 2016	June 2018

Objective	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Priority	Primary Responsible Organization	Responsible Unit/Division /Personnel	Start Date	Completion Date
Objective 3: Demonstrate the process used to identify public information needs of the affected area and methods of disseminating information during an incident.	The City can enhance PIO function capabilities and collaboration so as to enhance response capabilities in a major incident.	Distribute recommendations and lessons learned that stem from real-world incidents in the future through the Media Task Force.	Organization, Training	High	EMD	Communications Division	August 2016	Ongoing
	The City should better articulate social media/digital plans, policies, and procedures	Establish a social media working group.	Organization, Planning	Medium	Office of the Mayor	Communications	August 2016	December 2016
		Work with the EMD Operations Division to determine the role of social media monitoring within the EOC and the coordination between the PIO function and the Management and Planning & Intelligence Sections.	Organization	High	EMD	Communications Division / Operations Division	October 2016	October 2017

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