

AGENDA
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 7, 2008 9:00 a.m.
EOB Room, P- 4 Level, City Hall East

- I. **Call to Order, Introductions, Approval of Minutes**
- II. **Subcommittee Reports and Planning Teams**
 - Budget – Mayra Puchalski
 - Community Preparedness – Carol Parks
 - Fire / Life Safety – Richard Wuerth
 - Human Resources – Bobbi Jacobsen
 - Information Technology – Joyce Edson
 - Logistics – Joon Lee
 - Operations – Rob Freeman
 - Planning – Larry Meyerhofer
 - Shelter and Welfare – Kevin Regan
 - Training – Chris Ipsen
 - Others
- III. **2008 City of Los Angeles Annual Emergency Preparedness Exercise After Action Report – Chris Ipsen**
- IV. **Operation: Higher Ground Emergency Preparedness Exercise After Action Report – Chris Ipsen**
- V. **New Emergency Operations Center (Prop Q) – Rob Freeman**
- VI. **Citywide Status of Homeland Security Grants – Laura Shin**
- VII. **Old / New Business**
- VIII. **Adjournment**

Refreshments to be provided by the El Pueblo Monument

EMC MEETING INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT WEBSITE AT www.lacity.org/emd - CLICK ON Emergency Operations Organization, then EMC.

If you would like to be added to the EMC email distribution list, please send an email to wendy.hwang@lacity.org or contact Wendy Hwang at (213) 978-0544.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: May 1, 2008

To: Anna Burton, Chair
Emergency Management Committee

Emergency Management Committee Members

From: Chris Ipsen, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator II
Emergency Management Department

Subject: **2008 CITY OF LOS ANGELES ANNUAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
EXERCISE AFTER ACTION REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Emergency Management Committee approve the 2008 City of Los Angeles' Annual Emergency Preparedness Exercise After Action Report and forward to the Emergency Operations Board for approval at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Andreas Earthquake Exercise was led by staff of the Emergency Management Department, supported by the City's Emergency Operations Organization.

It was a table top exercise that assisted executive staff to work through issues that address at policy level, the capability of its department to deal with a catastrophic incident utilizing specific Immediate Action Steps for Continuity of Operations /Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) issues. Secondly, to begin preparing the City executives for Recovery and Reconstruction issues resulting from the Golden Guardian 2008 Exercise in November 2008. The Emergency Operations Center was not activated for this exercise.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of this report will have no impact on the City's General Fund.

Attachment

After Action Report San Andreas Earthquake Tabletop Exercise January 29, 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homeland security preparedness involves a cycle of outreach, planning, capability development, training, exercising, actual responses to events both planned and unplanned, evaluation, and improvement. The primary purpose of this exercise was to ensure that all departments and agencies of the City of Los Angeles have the capability to initially respond to a catastrophic incident utilizing specific Immediate Action Steps for Continuity of Operations /Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) issues. Secondly, to begin preparing the City executives for Recovery and Reconstruction issues resulting from the Golden Guardian 2008 Exercise in November 2008. This After-Action Report (AAR) is intended to assist the Los Angeles Emergency Operations Organization (EOO) in striving for preparedness excellence by documenting the information brought forth during the discussion.

Additional exercise objectives were:

- To confirm what City departments' immediate action steps would be after a 7.8 earthquake occurred on the San Andreas Fault.
- To determine what procedures Departments have put into place to ensure the continuity of operations, including caring for family members of staff.
- To take back any Best-Practices shared or developed during this exercise and incorporate them into your Department's current COOP/COG plan.

EXERCISE EVENTS SYNOPSIS

Check in started at 7:30 a.m. The exercise began at 8:30 a.m. with introductions and a discussion of the exercise process, followed by the presentation of the scenario. The scenario was a simulated 7.8 earthquake on the southern San Andreas Fault.

The participants were divided into three groups: Response, Support, and those with a Geographic Responsibility. All groups were given the earthquake scenario and asked a series of discussion questions regarding how their agency would respond to the event. Each group discussed the same questions and had several facilitators to assist them. The players answered each question for their agency. Each group then presented its answers to the entire group. The questions asked were:

1. *What are your Department's specific Immediate Action Steps?*
2. *What procedure does your Department have in place to ensure the continuity of department operations, including caring for the family members of Department personnel?*
3. *How are you going to communicate what the City's plan are for mass care and shelter, housing, and individual assistance to the private relief organizations and to the affected citizens?*
4. *What process is being utilized to gain and maintain accurate situational awareness and to begin gathering accurate damage assessment information?*

Battalion Chief Joe Castro of the Los Angeles Fire Department was the lead facilitator; he queried each group's rationale for some of its answers and asked follow-up questions.

Best Practices

There were several best practices identified by the facilitators and evaluators for each discussion question.

What are your Department's specific Immediate Action Steps?

- If departments work with contractors, they should assess the status of contractor provided direct services in order to see if they are operational or when they will return to operational status (contractors utilized for senior citizens services, i.e., delivery of meals, medication).
- Departments with the responsibility of assessing the damage following a catastrophic earthquake will deploy Damage/Safety Assessment Teams to inspect damage to facilities.
- At the Convention Center, a perimeter would be established to ensure no one gets back in center once evacuated.
- If required to evacuate, departments should have floor wardens that are trained through the Building Emergency Education Program (BEEP).

What procedure does your Department have in place to ensure the continuity of department operations, including caring for the family members of Department personnel?

- Allow employees to bring children to work, if child care is an issue.
- City departments should provide emergency personal preparedness training for their employees.
- Departments should set up an out of the area telephone number for emergency reporting instructions for employees.
- Departments should issue Government Emergency Telephone System (GETS) Cards to employees deemed as essential by management.
- If possible, departments should develop a system for their employees to be able to telecommute.
- Employees that are not utilizing Direct Deposit will experience problems with receiving their regular compensation.

How are you going to communicate what the City's plans are for mass care and shelter, housing, and individual assistance to private relief organizations and to affected citizens?

- Community Development Department has psychological professional contractors for people that require assistance on coping with their issues/problems after a disaster.
- CERT volunteers may be used to assist city departments where and when employees cannot report to work.
- If needed, GSD will maintain and manage hotel contracts and agreements for housing purposes.
- Use the City's 311 center and web site as a resource for distribution of public information.
- City departments have resources that can be utilized after a catastrophic earthquake, such as the Zoo's Concession Warehouse and Parking Lot will be made available to other departments for support.

What process is being utilized to gain and maintain accurate situational awareness and to begin gathering accurate damage assessment information?

- Departments should consider text messaging as an option to provide information due to its use of low bandwidth.
- Use geographical information systems (GIS) maps to indicate incident hot spots, operational and non-operational shelters.
- The Mayor's Office is prepared to utilize The Mayor's Media Relations Group to address the citizens and become the face of the disaster.
- LAPD will deploy its air ship to provide updates to the EOC on the City's situation.

PART 4: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is clear that many City departments have given much thought to preparing for and responding to major emergencies. However, the level of preparedness is not consistent across departments.

Ideally, each department should be prepared in the following areas:

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

An emergency such as the one depicted by this scenario, in which land line and cellular communications are disrupted, require that departments' executive management have some other means of communicating with at least its most essential employees and each other. Some ideas mentioned above include various types of radios and wireless texting/push emailing using Blackberries and other cellular devices. The weakness of 800 MHz radios are their limited range, while push-to-talk systems rely on cellular antennas. The advantage of wireless instant messaging (texting)/emailing over voice calls is that the former uses much less bandwidth. It takes less than 1 second to transmit a text message/email. Therefore, if cellular service is spotty, there is less chance of a text message being dropped. The BlackBerry system may be even more reliable since it uses an additional, proprietary text messaging system called PIN to PIN messaging. The BlackBerry texting system does not rely on cellular service and therefore can be used even when cellular service is unavailable. The drawback is that users need to know the unique PINs of the devices they are attempting to send messages to.

There must also be a plan for disseminating information to department employees when normal modes of communication are available, particularly when an emergency occurs when most employees are not at work. This can include phone trees, an informational phone number with taped messages updated as needed, and an informational webpage, also updated as necessary.

EMPLOYEE WELFARE

History suggests that employees will not come to work during an emergency if that means leaving their families in need or insecure. Therefore departments wanting the maximum number of its employees to respond to work after a major emergency need to take steps to encourage its employees to be even more prepared for emergencies than the public are. Methods include training, incentives, and free emergency supplies for an employee's home or vehicle. The responses above indicate many departments are in the process of making their employees more self sufficient.

A number of policy issues were brought up during the discussion Lack of childcare was mentioned as a possible impediment to employees coming to work. Will departments allow employees to bring their children to work because schools or childcare facilities

are closed? Another issue is employee safety at work. What plans do departments have in place to support employees that must be at work for extended periods of time? Do policies exist to protect employees coming to work during a flu pandemic? These and other personnel issues should be at least considered if not resolved before a major catastrophe occurs.

DAMAGE/SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Many departments have plans to assess damage to facilities and equipment. A few also have plans for using alternate work locations, though the lack of available City facilities is problematic. Multiple work shifts using the same facilities (two or three employees sharing a desk and computer), use of notebook computers and telecommuting are possible options to a shortage of workspace for office employees that could be considered. Solutions should be included in department emergency plans.

DATA BACK-UP

A number of departments stated that they back up their data. However, few back up data to distant locations that would be unaffected by the earthquake in this scenario. Ideally, departments should also back up important data or documents stored in microfiche, microfilm and paper files. At least one department mentioned backing up documents on flash drives that key employees carry with them.

CONCLUSION

The most likely catastrophe that could occur in the City of Los Angeles is a mega earthquake such as the one described in this exercise. This report documents the fact that many City departments and agencies take preparedness seriously and have given thought to how they would respond to such an event. Yet it is also clear that for many other departments and agencies, the preparation is not totally complete. This AAR's Best Practices should be incorporated into City Departmental Emergency Plans where applicable.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: May 1, 2008

To: Anna Burton, Chair
Emergency Management Committee

Emergency Management Committee Members

From: Chris Ipsen, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator II
Emergency Management Department

Subject: **OPERATION: HIGHER GROUND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
EXERCISE AFTER ACTION REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Emergency Management Committee approve the Operation: Higher Ground Exercise After Action Report and forward to the Emergency Operations Board for approval at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The On Thursday, February 7, 2008, the City of Los Angeles participated in a Level III exercise activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The City's participation in *Operation Higher Ground* was conducted in participation with Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), functioning in their lead capacity as Operational Area Exercise Coordinator.

The exercise was designed to be conducted over a 3-day period as a Functional Exercise (FE), simulating a continuous (36) hour period and was developed to test the Operational Areas response to a simulated tsunami incident. The communities within the City identified during this scenario as being at highest risk and requiring evacuation planning were the **Harbor, Venice and West Los Angeles** areas.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of this report will have no impact on the City's General Fund.

Attachment

OPERATION: HIGHER GROUND AFTER ACTION REPORT

Executive Summary:

On Thursday, February 7, 2008, the City of Los Angeles participated in a Level III exercise activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The City's participation in *Operation Higher Ground* was conducted in participation with Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), functioning in their lead capacity as Operational Area Exercise Coordinator. The Emergency Management Department (EMD) worked with L.A. County OEM during the exercise, providing follow-on facilitation, information and training coordination to all City Departments participating in the training event. In addition, EMD facilitated the City's involvement in the exercise by staffing the Exercise Director and Senior Exercise Controller positions.

The exercise was designed to be conducted over a 3-day period as a Functional Exercise (FE), simulating a continuous (36) hour period and was developed to test the Operational Areas response to a simulated tsunami incident. The communities within the City identified during this scenario as being at highest risk and requiring evacuation planning were the **Harbor, Venice and West Los Angeles** areas. Notification of STARTEX from the County to the City of Los Angeles, utilizing established communications links (*LASD to LAPD, LACoFire to LAFD and County OEM to EMD*) was to be further communicated out to all City Departments assigned to the EOC via the City's 3-1-1 system and the LAFD automated notification system. Simulated news broadcast(s), developed by OEM, in partnership with KCBS-2/KCAL-9 News helped provide exercise information and enhanced exercise realism.

Required protocols and procedures present within the EOC during the exercise included the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), as well as all established City of Los Angeles EOC standard operating procedures in place at the time. These incident management processes were observed and examined during the period of exercise play to determine participant familiarity with them and their functionality and ease of use within a fast-paced EOC environment.

Exercise evaluation was consistent with the federally mandated Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) requirements and involved the measurement of the City's capabilities in the following focus areas:

- EOC Management
- Emergency Public Information and Warning
- Communications
- Citizen Evacuation and Shelter
- Structural Damage Assessment

Evaluators utilized the Exercise Evaluation Guides provided in HSEEP Volume IV, which measured the identified incident management capabilities established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) within their targeted Task Capability List requirements. The individual tasks underscoring each capability measured came directly from the DHS Universal Task List.

The exercise ended with the EOC deactivation at the end of Day 1 at approx. 1430 hrs. Personnel from all responding City Departments were scheduled to return to the EOC as participants on Day 2 and Day 3, which was scheduled for February, 13 & 20. Based upon the exercise activity observed on February 7th in the EOC by the Evaluation Team, the Exercise Director & Senior Exercise Controller as well as EMD Management, the exercise clearly demonstrated the level of readiness capability of both the EOC facility and assigned personnel. A decision was made at this time by EMD Management, in consultation with Mayoral Staff, to scale back the City's involvement in subsequent *Operation Higher Ground* activities. This decision was based upon a determination that no further positive benefit would be gained and no further response capability would be demonstrated, especially when measured against the substantial time and effort necessary to continue the City's participation at the exercise level (*Level III on February 13th & Level II on February 20th*) planned.

Noted Areas of Strength:

There were several areas noted by evaluators or documented by participants in their evaluations.

- Several comments from EOC participants indicated that this exercise called for participation of all City Departments assigned to the EOC, including those not currently holding a seat in the EOC. The level of involvement by non-traditional responders within the EOC clearly demonstrated the levels of horizontal coordination necessary for effective response support during major incidents.
- The conversion of Field ICS forms and processes for use within the EOC was thought to be very beneficial by exercise participants. Specifically, the *Planning P for the EOC*, still in Draft form, and developed by the EMD Planning Division prior to the exercise, greatly assisted the Operations and Planning Sections as they worked together to develop the EOC Action Plan. The forms utilized provided proven planning techniques to participants, including the development of clear objectives and the setting of operational periods as well as assisting in the development of an EOC Organizational Chart.
- The incident management system employed in the EOC (*WebEOC*), when utilized effectively by trained EOC responders, did provide information and situational awareness in a real time, assisting several individual branches and units in maintaining a common operation picture.
- The EOC Directors position, staffed jointly by LAPD and LAFD functioned under Unified Command in the EOC Director role. The Director(s) were open-minded in their decision-making, maintaining an environment that allowed good dialogue to occur within the Management Section, especially during Briefings.
- The decision to utilize evaluators from outside the City Family was thought to be a tremendous positive for our efforts to advance emergency management within the City of Los Angeles. Having outside Emergency Managers participate and evaluate all aspects of the EOC exercise, assisted EMD, by enhancing the operational effectiveness of the EOC evaluation process.

Noted Areas for Improvement:

Areas for improvement were documented throughout the entire spectrum of exercise operations. Areas for improvement in exercise development were noted. This was especially noted not only in the lack of effective coordination between the City and the County Office of Emergency Management, but was evident as well in observing OEM's focus being only on Los Angeles County Department specific planning and media efforts, to the exclusion of the necessary Operational Area coordination, which from the City's perspective was lacking and ineffective.

In addition, the level of difficulty encountered between EMD, functioning as the City-lead for *Operation Higher Ground*, and City Departments during the development phase of the City-specific scenario was problematic. For many Departments, as well as for EMD staff, the lack of fundamental knowledge, training and experience utilizing the Department of Homeland Security's Exercise and Evaluation Program (*HSEEP*) requirements hampered our collective ability to create an exercise that effectively melded and interwove the specific duties and responsibilities of individual Departments into a comprehensive, all-encompassing training experience.

Some of the specific areas for improvement noted by participants and evaluators during the course of the exercise itself included:

- Lack of EOC Process-familiarity and lack of understanding or knowledge of the EOC function impacted EOC effectiveness. Though many EOC training opportunities had been made available in the months leading up to the exercise, many of the department responders were unsure of their assigned role or responsibilities, whether within their assigned Branch, Group or Unit.
- There was no documented, easy to read and comprehensible EOC activation guide for any EOC Section. It was noted by evaluators that participants were unfamiliar with their assigned roles. An EOC activation guide would have increased responders understanding of their roles, dramatically improving the effectiveness of each Section.
- The Management Section, throughout the course of the exercise, was essentially working in an information bubble. Information developed within this Section often did not make it out to the EOC. Conversely, real-time information coming into the Units, Branches and Sections often did not make it into the Management Section. This situation gave the EOC Directors (*LAPD and LAFD*) and their immediate staff the false impression that they had all the need-to-know information available and that EOC Management's intent was being properly communicated to the entire EOC staff. This was often not the case.
- Information displayed within the EOC was difficult to see. This problem complicated the ability of EOC participants to acquire and comprehend the big picture. Placing information displays only on WebEOC will not be much assistance if participants do not have a comfort level with how to access this vital information. The placement of large, easy to read displays, located throughout the EOC, would have assisted all participants to both acquire and maintain a common operating picture.
- Many EOC participants were observed having problems accessing and properly utilizing WebEOC. It was noted that one Department liaison brought their staff into the EOC, activated WebEOC for each individual responders and then departed. When approached

by an evaluator and asked if they felt they could effectively utilize the system with a moderate degree of effectiveness, each responder from this Department replied, "No."

- There was little to no Section briefings noted or observed during the entire exercise. This exacerbated the low situational awareness within the Sections, leading to conflicting information between Units and Branches, often resulting in individual Department's planning efforts being unfocused and uncoordinated. Noted were incidents where briefings were actually held within certain Sections, but only between those Departments with established first-responder roles. This often left other City Departments within that same Section with critical missions and actual roles in the incident in the dark as to the current situation. These Departments were prepared and ready to carry out these responsibilities, but were never consulted due to a lack of effective coordination within their own Sections.
- City Departments within both the Operations and Logistics Sections were observed activating plans that were not coordinated, or in many cases even known about by Section Coordinators or other Departments. One Department produced a special operations plan and a Department specific plan that, until that time, was unknown by other departments. Other Departments could have benefited from knowing this critical information beforehand instead of becoming aware in the middle of the incident.
- There was a lack of an effective Public Information Officer role. There were no references seen nor application demonstrated in the EOC of a Joint Information Center or Joint Information System process. This lack of effective information coordination directly led to mixed and unapproved messages and information coming out of the EOC, without the approval of the EOC Directors. No Public Information message was produced in the entire five hours of exercise play.
- There was a complete lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities within the EOC, due to a lack of effective identification amongst the players, controllers and evaluators, as well as a lack of familiarity with EOC positions and roles. It was difficult for participants to understand who they reported to, leading to a break-down in Unity of Command and the resultant confusion and lack of an effective EOC organization.
- The Security of the EOC was very relaxed and totally ineffective. Though OPS Security Officers diligently attempted to carry out the duties assigned to them during an EOC activation, the ineffective procedures and a culture that to date has not promoted a truly secure EOC environment, lead to a situation where representatives from City Departments who had not been activated for the event, were observed entering the EOC through unsecured doors, without signing in or out, to 'Observe' the EOC activity, to have lunch or to generally converse with exercise participants, on non-exercise related topics during the exercise. In this permissive security environment there was nothing OPS Security Officers could have done, by themselves that would have improved the overall security situation within the EOC.

Recommendations:

The *Operation Higher Ground* exercise and the associated evaluation process demonstrated to EMD and the EOC the areas where the City of Los Angeles needs to re-focus our training and planning efforts. Chief among these efforts is the need to re-structure and re-train both the EOC and non - EOC Departments to ensure that EOC functions and operations are clearly understood and carried out by assigned Departments and their personnel.

As part of the improvement planning process, the General Manager of the Emergency Management Department has created an EOC Taskforce within EMD, which has been tasked to create a Process Development Road Map for EOC Operations. This road-map, when fully developed, will incorporate the following critical elements:

- **Updated EOC Organization** – a new EOC Organizational Chart, with a Deputy EOC Director and Deputy Section Coordinator positions staffed by EMD and incorporating the Federal Emergency Support Functions.
- **Documented EOC Standard Operating Procedures** – Fully developed and documented procedures for effective EOC operations, based upon SEMS & NIMS and covering EOC Activation, initial and sustained activities and De-mobilization.
- **Established EOC Planning Process** – A Planning P for developing an initial and follow-on EOC Action Plans with a step-by-step definitive process established.
- **Established Section Specific Processes** - Fully developed and documented procedures for effective Section specific operations, based upon SEMS & NIMS and covering Section activation, initial and sustained activities, a Section specific Planning P and de-mobilization planning.
- **Focused EOC Training** – EOC Operations based training, for both EMD & City Family, based upon SEMS requirements and Federal Joint Operations Center best-practices, as well as credentialing for EOC positions utilizing a Position Task Book process similar to that created for Wild-Land Firefighting Incident Management Teams.
- **Positive Testing & Evaluation** – Testing based upon Position Task Book requirements for all Management Staff and EOC Sections.
- **Changes to the L.A. Admin. Code** – Updates and revisions to the Admin Code are being developed that reflect the need for change noted in the Evaluator's comments, the EMD General Manager's observations and this After-Action Report.
- **Quick Fixes** - Areas where improvements are currently being implemented by EOC Task Force members within the EOC include development of proper responder identification for EOC participants and color-coded EOC vests with positions titles clearly displayed on the front and back of the vests. The use of colored-coded vests, which are used by most public agencies within California and the Nation, can greatly reduce confusion for EOC responders, whether during exercise events or actual situations.

As well, EMD should consider the following recommendations:

- Training for Department Public Information Officers to work as a Field PIO, EOC PIO or in a JIC. On-line training, through the FEMA website is currently available to all City PIOs on the JIC/JIS process.
- Conducting a series of Table-Top Exercises for EOC participants to practice all aspects of the new or newly revised EOC activities before participating in a full scale exercise.

- Training for EMD Training and Exercise Division Staff, along with Emergency Preparedness Coordinators from City Department on Federal HSEEP exercise development and evaluation requirements. This training would assist all concerned in understanding the unique requirements of conducting the full range of emergency management exercise activities. A training course from the CA Office of Homeland Security on the HSEEP process will be delivered to City Family during spring 2008.
- More opportunities for EOC responders to train and exercise with the other Departments assigned within their Section. It is strongly felt that the more interaction the individual Departments are able to engage in before an actual emergency occurs, the more all Section participants will be prepared to work and coordinate together and the less they will need to try to understand each others unique capabilities and needs for the first time in the initial phases of a catastrophic incident response.
- Clearly marked vests with clear titles for Evaluators and Controllers to avoid participant confusion.