

AGENDA
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 2, 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. **Operation: Higher Ground Emergency Preparedness Exercise After Action Report**
– Chris Ipsen
- IV. **Hazardous Materials Annex Revision** – Larry Meyerhofer
- V. **New Emergency Operations Center (Prop Q)** – Rob Freeman
- VI. **After Action Report Tracking** – Mayra Puchalski
- VII. **Citywide Status of Homeland Security Grants** – Laura Shin
- VIII. **Old / New Business**
- IX. **Adjournment**

Refreshments to be provided by the Los Angeles Fire Department

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: June 26, 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

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 (36) hour exercise period and was developed to test the Operational Areas response to a simulated tsunami incident. The City's EOC was activated at Level III for the first day, for the other two days of the exercise, the City's EOC participation consisted of providing City status reports to the County EOC. 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. Although some basic EOC introduction courses have been offered by EMD for some time, because many department responders seemed unsure of their assigned role or responsibility, a more focused and comprehensive EOC training curriculum is needed.
- There was no documented, easy to read and comprehensible EOC activation guide for many EOC Sections. It was noted by evaluators that participants were unfamiliar with their assigned roles. An EOC activation guide for every section would have increased responders understanding of their roles, dramatically improving the effectiveness of each Section.
- Not enough time was given for section coordinators to disseminate information to their respective sections. As a result, 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 due to a lack of practical training and regular use. 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 perhaps caused by numerous time-consuming EOC Management meetings. 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. Although specific section unit checklists were available, section specific plans need to be coordinated through EMD and vetted into the new EOC process currently being developed by EMD’s Task Force.
- 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. It was difficult for participants to understand whom they reported to, leading to a breakdown in Unity of Command and the resultant confusion and lack of an effective EOC organization.
- Access rights to the EOC needs to be reviewed for security purposes. Currently, any staff member with an EOC access badge can enter either at the front security station or through the backdoor. This issue is currently being addressed by EMD’s Task Force and will be incorporated into the new EOC process.

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.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: June 26, 2008

To: Anna Burton, Chair
Emergency Management Committee

Emergency Management Committee Members

From: Larry Meyerhofer, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator II
Emergency Management Department

Subject: **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ANNEX REVISION**

Recommendation

That the Emergency Management Committee (EMC) accept the attached Hazardous Materials Response Plan Revision from the Task Force and forward for approval to the Emergency Operations Board (EOB) at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Executive Summary

In May, 2008 the Emergency Management Department initiated a review and revision of the City's 1993 Hazardous Materials Annex. This was in response to a request from both Fire and Police Departments regarding the need to clarify their respective responsibilities in hazardous materials incidents. A Task Force was assembled, consisting of pertinent City Departments.

Attached is the final draft of the plan representing the work of the Task Force.

Attachment