



Staff Report

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REPORT TO UPDATE THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE CITY'S PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTERS

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

The recent events that occurred in Louisiana and other parts of the world are a reminder for everyone to look at an updated personal emergency plan and review city preparedness for disasters. The report is for informational purposes. No City Council action is required. Citizens are encouraged to educate themselves and be prepared for emergencies.

Background

Disasters can strike at any time; earthquakes come without warning. The State of California has been one of the nation's leaders in disaster planning and preparedness. The California State emergency planning structure Standardized Emergency Management System was used to formulate the Federal National Incident Management System model.

With Hurricane Karina, the earthquakes in India and the flooding that occurred in the East, it is a reminder to everyone to revisit disaster plans they have for the home, workplace and the community.

Discussion

Disaster planning is a personal choice first. It is incumbent upon every member of the community to be prepared to care for themselves and their family during disasters for a period of at least three days. But as we saw with Hurricane Katrina, it may take up to five days for aid to arrive.

Depending upon where you live in San Mateo County will depend on how you will need to prepare for one of the sixteen different scenarios that you and your family could face. As a reminder you must be prepared for blackouts, chemical emergencies, drought, earthquakes, fires, heat waves, floods, hurricanes, mud slides, terrorism, thunderstorms, tornados, tsunamis, volcanoes, wildfires and winter storms.

The American Red Cross, State Department of Emergency Services and Federal Emergency Management Agency, in general recommends the following guidelines for the public:

1. Understand what could happen to you under the various disaster scenarios. It's important to inform yourself of the dangers you could face and to be prepared and know what you and your family will need.
2. Have a disaster plan for you and your family, explain the various scenarios to your family and develop solid plans to deal with a wide variety of disasters.
3. Practice your plan; assemble a disaster kit with the appropriate items, including flashlights, food, water, medication, fire extinguisher and portable shelter. These are just a few of the items you will need during an emergency.
4. Maintain a disaster kit and update it yearly. Make sure that you maintain emergency kits in your vehicle and at work. The kits should be placed in portable containers so if you need to evacuate you can easily get to your emergency kit and evacuate.
5. Have a portable, battery powered, radio with extra batteries to keep informed of emergency updates and bulletins. The two local radio stations which broadcast messages for the Emergency Alert System (EAS) are KCBS 740 AM (English) and KSJO FM 92.3 (Spanish).

Personal preparation is the key for success outcomes during a disaster. There are a number of books, pamphlets and web sites where you can obtain various information on how to create family plans and prepare yourself and your family. To better understand what to do and how to prepare, enroll in a Community Emergency Response Team class sponsored by the City. This class is designed to teach the basics in rescue techniques and first aid. Some web sites with valuable information are:

- American Red Cross Disaster Preparedness at www.prepare.org
- California Office of Emergency Services at www.oes.ca.gov
- San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services at www.co.sanmateo.ca.us

The City of Belmont operates an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at City Hall. The EOC is the core for decisions and planning during a disaster. The EOC serves as the communication link between Belmont, other cities, San Mateo County and the State of California.

The EOC is staffed with city employees whose roles are well defined. Each city department has an EOC representative in keeping with California's Standardized Emergency Management Systems (SEMS). During a large-scale emergency, a department generally oversees functions for which they are typically responsible. Each city department has specific functional responsibilities:

All EOC's are setup and run according to the Incident Command System. There are five areas to the Belmont EOC. Within those five areas are several sub-areas with specific responsibilities.

The ICS structure allows for centralized management of a jurisdiction's response, which is performed, from the EOC. It provides a centralized focus of authority and information and allows for face-to-face coordination among multi-disciplinary personnel making decisions regarding priorities in the use of resources. The following is the breakdown of the Belmont EOC structure. The City departments noted indicate which members of City staff would normally staff that section.

Mayor and City Council – The primary role of the Mayor and City Council is the continuance of City government. The Council may make policy decisions and maintain contact with the community. They may prepare or issue emergency updates as needed and may generate proclamations or request disaster declarations.

Management (City Manager, City Clerk, Human Resources, City Attorney) - Overall responsibility for the incident or event. Sets objectives and priorities for the EOC Action Plan.

- Safety & Staging
- Legal
- Press Information
- EOC/OES Liaison

Operations (Police, Fire, DPW) - Coordinates all operations in the jurisdiction in support of emergency response. Develops tactical objectives, sets the response organization and directs resources. Provides input into the Incident Action Plan.

- Fire
- Law
- Public Works
- Support

Planning (Community Development) - Collects, evaluates, and disseminates information within the EOC. Prepares the EOC Action Plan in coordination with other functions to accomplish the objectives & priorities approved by Management. Maintains documentation.

- Resources
- Situation
- Documentation

Logistics (Parks & Rec) - Provides resources and all other services in support of the incident. Provides input into the EOC Action Plan

- Technology
- Support

Finance (Finance Dept.) - Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides input to the EOC Action Plan.

Coordinates procurement payment and cost accounting, time recording and claims management.

There are three levels of EOC Activation:

Level 1 - A minor to moderate incident characterized by adequate local response capability and sufficient resources favorable to resolve the situation. A Local Emergency may or may not be proclaimed.

➤ Minimum staffing, Supervisory personnel from Police, Fire and Public Works.

Level 2 - A moderate to severe emergency characterized by a need for mutual aid to ensure a favorable resolution of the situation. In most cases a Local Emergency will be proclaimed.

➤ A State of Emergency may be proclaimed.

➤ Minimum staffing, Level 1 personnel plus Operations Chief, Section Chiefs as appropriate and Liaison/Agency representatives as appropriate.

➤ EOC will be open at this level.

Level 3 - A major disaster with a depletion of resources and Mutual Aid response capability area-wide, necessitating extensive statewide and federal assistance. Generally, a Local Emergency and State of Emergency will be proclaimed. A Presidential Declaration may or may not be proclaimed.

➤ All EOC positions are staffed.

The City has also identified several shelters and will operate these in conjunction with the American Red Cross; however, the shelters are only designed to handle a portion of the community. The shelters must meet certain standards, which requires each shelter to have showers, kitchens and large floor space. Currently, we have only three facilities that meet this requirement: Notre Dame de Namur University gym, Notre Dame High School's gym and Carlmont High School's gym. It is important to remember that neighborhood schools will also play important roles in disasters as temporary staging points. Emergency evaluation points and distribution points for disaster items.

The City participates several times per year in the set up of the EOC and working with San Mateo County EOC and various disaster scenarios. It is important to remember that the City may serve as a support resource to other Bay Area communities who may be affected more severely than Belmont. We could be sending resources such as police, fire, DPW and clerical staff to other cities to support their needs.

Fiscal Impact

Currently the City has approximately \$35,705 in the emergency service budget, which is contained in the police budget. The City contracts with San Mateo County EOC through a JPA

for \$24,971. The remaining \$4,968 is to cover the cost of phones and some minor equipment within the EOC.

The Police Department which coordinates Belmont Safe Schools, CERT and Police Volunteers have, funded these programs through fund raising and only received a one time \$5,000 grant from the City Council for Belmont Safe Schools.

Public Contact

The City has worked with both public and private schools through Belmont Safe School. The Police Department maintains a very active CERT program with approximately fifty members. The Police Department has also conducted emergency safety talks with the chamber and a number of homeowners groups.

On November 12, 2005 there will be a unique opportunity for the community to speak with first responders at the San Mateo County Fairgrounds from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. There will be booth displays and equipment for the public to view.

Recommendation

Staff has provided you with this report for information and discussion

Alternatives

1. Take no action

Attachments

- A. Checklist – Preparing Your Family For An Emergency
- B. Checklist – Emergency Supplies Checklist

Respectfully submitted,

Donald J. Mattei
Chief of Police

Jack R. Crist
Interim City Manager