



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: FIRE-OEM
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: January 9, 2024
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden
Director(s)
Contact Info: Kelly Hubbard, Director, Office of Emergency Management
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Santa Barbara County Employee Sheltering During Emergencies Policy

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Risk Management Concurrence:

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Human Resources Concurrence:

As to Form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and adopt the Employee Sheltering During Emergencies Policy (Attachment A) which establishes guidance on sheltering for County employees who are unable to return home due to emergencies; and
- b) Determine that the action is not a “project” under the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) because it is an are organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

In conjunction with the updated *Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Policy before the Board today as a separate item*, the *Employee Sheltering During Emergencies Policy* establishes clear guidance on securing lodging for employees who are unable to return home due to emergencies impacting roadways or other factors. In order to provide equitable and safe accommodations without impacting public access to lodging during emergencies the policy includes a tiered approach, described in the background section below, that provides options for employees in a coordinated and fiscally responsible way.

Background:

Historically, emergencies have impacted County employees' ability to return home requiring arrangements to be made which varied widely from department to department. Some departments put staff into hotels while others directed them to public evacuation shelters, while others allowed employees to bed down within County facilities. This variance creates inequities amongst county employees and reduces the number of hotel rooms available for evacuated or stranded community members. Additionally, the cost of non-congregate sheltering for employees may negatively impact county funds. The *Employee Sheltering During Emergencies* Policy will support equity across departments and require that any non-congregate sheltering costs are approved by the County Director of Emergency Services.

The *Employee Sheltering During Emergencies Policy*, Attachment A, provides for a tiered approach to sheltering County employees unable to get home during an emergency. First, in the event employees are unable to get home due to disaster impacts such as damage to the roads or road closures, they are encouraged to be self-sufficient by checking with coworkers, friends, and family that may be able to provide temporary lodging. Employees may choose to secure a hotel room at their own expense, or employees may stay in County facilities such as offices, provided proper notification and approvals are received as detailed in the Policy.

Second, if employees who are unable to get home due to disaster impacts request support for overnight sheltering, the County will provide congregate shelters for County employees. Finally, any employee non-congregate sheltering, such as hotels or short-term rentals, are not permitted without approval of the County Director of Emergency Services.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There are no direct costs associated with the approval of this policy.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Employee Sheltering During Emergencies Policy

Authored by:

Stacy Silva, Emergency Manager, Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management