

# Memorandum



**Date:** September 9, 2005

**To:** Honorable Susan Rose, Chair and  
Members of the Board of Supervisors

**From:** Michael F. Brown  
County Executive Officer

**Subject:** Disaster Planning and Preparedness, All Supervisorial Districts  
**(No. D-5 on September 13, 2005 Board of Supervisors Agenda)**

**cc:** Department Directors  
Bruce Carter, OES Manager

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## **Recommendation:**

That the Board of Supervisors: Receive report regarding disaster preparedness and response in light of Hurricane Katrina and provide direction as appropriate.

## **Background**

At the September 6, 2005 Board of Supervisors hearing, the Board directed staff to return on September 13, 2005 with a report on the status of the County's disaster planning in light of Hurricane Katrina as well as County resources that have been provided to aid in recovery efforts.

## **Report**

Hurricane Katrina is expected to exceed all past disasters in the United States in terms of its widespread devastation and cost. As of September 7, 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimated that 235,000 evacuees residing in the American Red Cross (ARC), non-ARC, and state run shelters in 17 states. FEMA individual assistance claims totaled 320,000 as of September 6, 2005 and preliminary flood insurance claims totaled over 77,000. FEMA projects that the housing stock may take 3-5 years to reestablish; based on the assumption that at least 300,000 families need temporary housing. Almost 20 states have declared Hurricane Katrina related emergencies, including California. All 50 states along with over 90 countries and international organizations have offered assistance.

As of September 9, 2005 California has been polled but not officially requested to accommodate Hurricane Katrina evacuees.

In response to the escalating needs resulting from the disastrous hurricane Katrina in the Gulf States region, County departments continue to step up and answer the call for help. The Fire Department has deployed 17 members and rescue search dog, Duke, to assist with search and rescue and incident management teams deployed in the hurricane area. The Sheriff's department has law enforcement officers on standby and ready for immediate deployment. The Public Health Department has representatives on Disaster Medical Assistance Teams that are standing by for immediate deployment. Not only will these county responders provide much needed resources to the response, they will also bring back valuable experience and enhanced expertise with the response and recovery efforts to be shared with fellow county response agencies.

It is important to recognize that Santa Barbara County differs significantly from the hurricane raved area, most notably in geography and climatology. Hurricanes predominantly impact the east coast and Gulf States. However, Santa Barbara County does face the threat of natural disasters. This report focuses on the County's disaster plans and preparedness efforts.

### Santa Barbara County Disaster Plans

Santa Barbara County has a number of emergency plans and procedures in place to ensure an effective response to emergencies that may impact the county. County response personnel also participate in a number of emergency exercises designed to evaluate and refine existing plans and procedures. The goal is to provide effective management tools for a coordinated emergency response in order to provide for the needs of the citizens of Santa Barbara County. The main disaster plans approved by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services include:

- Santa Barbara County Standardized Emergency Management (SEMS) Multi Hazard Functional Plan
- Santa Barbara County Hazardous Materials Emergency Response (the Area) Plan
- Santa Barbara County Multi Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The **SEMS Multi-Hazard Functional Plan** (MHFP) addresses the Santa Barbara Operational Areas planned response to extraordinary emergencies associated with natural disasters such as earthquakes, major fires, etc., technological incidents, and national security emergencies. The plan does not address normal day-to-day emergencies or the well-established and routine procedures used in

copied with such emergencies. Instead, the operational concepts reflected in this plan focus on potential large-scale disasters, which can generate unique situations requiring unusual emergency responses. This plan is a preparedness document designed to include the Santa Barbara Operational Area as part of the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

Each element of the emergency management organization is responsible for assuring the preparation of appropriate and current standard operating procedures (SOP), resource lists, and checklists that describe how assigned responsibilities are performed to ensure a successful response during a major disaster. Such SOPs include the specific emergency authorities that designate officials and their successors during emergencies.

The **Santa Barbara County Hazardous Materials Response (the Area) Plan** includes hazardous materials emergency information involved in response to a hazardous materials incident within the County. The purpose of the Area Plan is to identify responsibilities and establish procedures for responding agencies in the event of a hazardous materials emergency. Knowledge of these responsibilities and procedures can assist emergency personnel in their response efforts and aid in the protection of life, property and the environment. The Area Plan will be activated in response to a release or threatened release of hazardous materials within Santa Barbara County, upon determination by the Incident Commander.

The **Santa Barbara County Multi Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan** is not a response plan, but documents the natural hazards that may impact the county and proposes solutions to lessen the impacts. This Plan is mandated by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and received state and federal approval in February 2005. Hazard mitigation focuses attention and resources on jurisdictional policies and actions that will produce successive benefits over time. This plan dealing with local hazards and risks was formulated through a systematic process centered on the participation of citizens, businesses, public officials and other stakeholders, to the extent possible.

The emphasis of the plan is on the assessment and avoidance of identified risks, implementing loss reduction measures for existing exposures and insuring critical services and facilities survive a disaster. Hazard mitigation strategies and measures avoid losses by limiting new exposures in identified hazard areas, alter the hazard by eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence, avert the hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or adapt to the hazard by modifying structures or standards.

## Recent Drills and Exercises

Drills and exercises ensure the county's responders preparedness. Santa Barbara County personnel have participated in a number of recent response exercises and emergencies that have impacted Santa Barbara County. Incident specific Incident Action Plans are prepared for each of these scenarios.

- The County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated during the winter storms earlier this year. County personnel, in coordination with the cities, state agencies, utilities and volunteer organizations responded to provide emergency management command and control.
- Representatives from OES, Public Health, and the Agriculture Commissioners office participated in two FEMA evaluated nuclear power preparedness exercises with Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo County and PG&E. The exercises evaluate a coordinated federal, state and local government response to simulated emergencies in the unlikely event of a release from the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. The 3-day November dress rehearsal and subsequent 3-day exercise evaluated a response to a plume release from the power plant impacting foodstuffs and livestock. The April dress rehearsal and May exercise evaluated the county's ability to provide care and shelter for evacuees from San Luis Obispo County. Over 8 days were dedicated to the County's response to a multitude of issues concerning a nuclear power plant event.
- In April OES facilitated a voluntary evacuation exercise for the high-fire hazard area of Mission Canyon in the Santa Barbara foothills. Participants included local and state response agencies and volunteer organizations witnessed by state and local political representatives.
- The Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) Industrial Mutual Aid Plan was exercised last month with participants from private industry, OES and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. The Board adopted the Plan in February 1994. The Plan provides an emergency management framework and a process for requesting mutual aid among industry participants. The Plan is a collaborative effort among industry and public response agencies.
- The Public Health Department conducted "Operation Gaucho" with UCSB's Student Health Services on July 29, 2005 to exercise the mobilization of mass clinics and provide antibiotics or vaccines to the public. Over 300 student, faculty volunteers and health care workers participated.
- County Fire, Sheriff's and Health Department participated in a joint anthrax response exercise with the US Postal Service and other state and federal agencies in August. A field drill was conducted with the USPS and the County Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Team on September 7, 2005.

### Fuel Contingency Plan

Immediately following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf of Mexico and, in particular, on oil suppliers, the County Executive Officer directed that a Committee comprised of County staff meet to discuss and prepare recommendations on an Emergency Fuel Plan ("Plan"). The Plan will create a policy for allocating fuel among countywide departments and affiliated services during a fuel shortage. In particular, the Plan will develop strategies related to:

- Distribution of fuel to County vehicles during an emergency and rationing of fuel when necessary;
- Storage capacity and locations, including scenario planning in case key storage facilities are damaged and unavailable; and,
- Minimum fuel stock levels to provide appropriate levels of fuel in the event of an emergency.

In addition to developing this Plan, ongoing efforts will be made to reduce gasoline usage and improve the efficient use of county vehicles. Discussions on these efforts are continuing and a report with recommendations will be presented to the Board at a later date.

The Plan's elements include the following aspects:

- Identify County vehicles to be rationed fuel during an emergency and categorize them based on (1) public safety and emergency response; (2) roads and flood control, bridge inspection and public health; and, (3) other county vehicles
- Identify storage capacity and locations by fuel type
- Identify recommended minimum emergency fuel stock levels and locations
- Identify contingencies if key storage facilities are damaged and unavailable

### Hurricane Katrina's Lessons

There are many lessons to be learned from Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact. County OES will be coordinating with other key departments to reassess the County's current response and recovery system to see where revisions and upgrades are appropriate. Key plans that are in place that will be reevaluated include:

- Offsite computer back-up of critical information and documents
- Mission Critical System contingency plans
- Fuel supplies and telecommuting policies
- Water and food supplies
- Mass shelter plans

Subject: Disaster Planning and Preparedness

Agenda: September 13, 2005

Page 6 of 6

- Evacuation issues
- Potential flooding threats posed by Santa Ynez and Santa Maria Rivers

Issues that will also be reassessed include emergency public information, community disaster training.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to pursue the actions contained in this report and report back in October 2005.