



**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
COUNTYWIDE POLICY MANUAL**

SUBJECT:	SANTA BARBARA COUNTY DISASTER SERVICE WORKER EMPLOYEE POLICY	ITEM NUMBER:	XX-XXXX
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	FIRE (OEM)	APPROVAL DATE:	JANUARY 9, 2024
APPROVER(S):	BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	REVIEW DATE:	JANUARY 2027
VERSION:	2	PAGE:	PAGE 1 OF 9

1. PURPOSE

To provide standard direction for County employees to fulfil their role as Disaster Service Workers (DSW) as outlined in California Government Code § 3100-3109 and Chapter 12 of the Santa Barbara County Code, and in alignment with Resolution 09-251, which adopted the National Incident Management System by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

Santa Barbara County employees are Disaster Service Workers (DSW). Services provided by County employees are an important element in ensuring the health and safety of Santa Barbara County residents. Disaster Service Worker statutes protect the health and safety and preservation of the lives and property from the effects of natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies. (Gov. Code § 3100.) These types of emergencies may not always be proclaimed or declared but nonetheless result in conditions of disaster or extreme peril to life or property. (*Id.*) Per [California Government Code section 3100](#) Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance for Disaster Service Workers and Public Employees in the event of an emergency, “all public employees¹ are hereby declared to be Disaster Service Workers subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law,” regardless of emergency proclamation or declaration. In addition, [Santa Barbara County Code, Chapter 12-14\(a\)](#), adds that during a proclaimed local, state, or federal emergency, all County employees shall be considered Disaster Service Workers and shall be available to the Director of Emergency Services (DES) in order to respond to the emergency. This policy outlines the County’s expectations of all County employees as Disaster Service Workers to participate in training and respond to emergencies as directed, as well as clarify departments’ ability to seek reimbursement of employee response costs. This policy replaces in its entirety the January 4, 2000, “Santa Barbara County Policy for Employees in the Event of a Declared Emergency/Natural Disaster/Inclement Weather.”

This policy includes:

- Section 1: General Disaster Service Worker Policy
- Section 2: Emergency Response and Activation
- Section 3: DSW EOC & Field Employee Assignments
- Section 4: DSW Training Requirements
- Section 5: Emergency Cost Tracking

¹ The term “public employees” includes all persons employed by the County, excluding a person who is legally employed but who is not a citizen or national of the United States. (Gov. Code § 3101.)

Section 6: Disaster Cost Recovery for DSW Costs

3. DEFINITIONS

Define terms specific to this policy.

TERM	DEFINITION
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)	Written plans that outline how each department and the county will adapt during emergencies to provide essential functions and services despite disruption(s). These plans include steps for resuming essential services safely and quickly post emergency.
Director of Emergency Services (DES)	In accordance with Santa Barbara County Code, Chapter 12-4 the County Executive Officer shall be the "Director of Emergency Services" for the operational area. The DES may designate an Assistant County Executive Officer to assume the role of Director of Emergency Services when the County Executive Officer is absent.
Disaster Service Worker (DSW)	All public employees, city, county, state, special district, and other local governmental or public agencies, subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their superiors or by law.
Department Operations Center (DOC)	A designated location established to coordinate resources and track activities related to a department's response. The DOC focuses only on department resources and activities and operates separately but in conjunction with the Emergency Operations Center.
Emergency	Any incident, emergency, disaster, or occurrence requiring County staff to support the preparedness for, response to and recovery of the County, the Operational Area, or the protection of the health and safety and preservation of the lives and property of Santa Barbara County residents from serious inclement weather, natural, or manmade disaster, or an incident requiring the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or associated field response and support activities (i.e. evacuation shelter).
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)	A designated location established to support field response activities, business continuity, and crisis communications through the prioritization of activities and the allocation of available resources, incident documentation, operational area coordination, and release of coordinated public information.
Emergency Response Staff	All County employees are DSWs, however some are also designated as "emergency response" staff in their daily duties, such as Sheriff or Custody Deputies, Firefighters, Probation Officers, Animal Control Officers, and other designated staff.
Emergency Work	Work which must be done immediately to save lives and to protect improved property and public health and safety, or to avert or lessen the threat of a major disaster. (44 C.F.R. § 206.201(b))
Field Emergency Support Services	Establishing and/or supporting temporary shelters, points of distribution, warming or cooling centers, unhoused emergency shelters, local assistance centers, or other support services that provide direct assistance to the community during an emergency.
Office of Emergency Management (OEM)	County Division responsible for the mitigation, preparedness, planning, coordination of response, and recovery activities

	related to county emergencies including serving as the primary coordination point for the Operational Area when emergency activities are affecting more than one jurisdiction, and/or the unincorporated areas of the county.
Operational Area	The County and all political subdivisions within the geographic boundaries of Santa Barbara County including cities, special districts, other local governmental or public agencies, and non-governmental and non-profit partner agencies. This is the intermediate level of the state emergency services organization in which the County Office of Emergency Management serves as the Operational Area Coordinator.
Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	Established or prescribed methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations, activities, or in designated situations, such as activation of Disaster Service Worker Employees, for adherence to established policies.

4. POLICY

Section 1: General Disaster Service Worker Policy

When hired, all employees will sign an Oath of Office, making them aware of their role as Disaster Service Workers. Additionally, new employee training from County Human Resources provides more information on the role of a DSW, including that they will be required to respond to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Department Operations Center (DOC), or to support field associated emergency response and recovery activities related to any emergency.

Although ALL County employees are DSWs, some are also designated as “emergency response” staff in their daily duties. This may include Sheriff or Custody Deputies, Firefighters, Probation Officers, Animal Control Officers, and other designated employees. These employees are still considered DSWs and are subject to DSW recall for any emergency. However, emergency response employees may follow Department specific policies in responding to an emergency. It is important to note, that ALL Department employees can be recalled for EOC, DOC, and field support activities, and that this will be done in coordination with Department leadership to limit impact to Department essential functions.

Any time an employee is activated as a Disaster Service Worker, that role shall become their primary focus until they are reassigned, relieved by another person, or the position they are assigned has been deactivated.

Oath of Office

All Santa Barbara County employees, regular, extra help and contractors on payroll, shall receive and sign the Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Oath of Office. This oath includes acknowledgement and acceptance of the role as a DSW. Per California Government Code section 3105, DSW Oath of Office taken by County employees are filed in the employee’s personnel file.

Administration of the Oath of Office is identified in the Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). OEM will update the SOP and the Oath of Office processes as needed in coordination with County Human Resources and County Counsel.

DSW Oaths of Office are to be taken by elected and appointed officials of the County as well. In these cases, the following applies:

- These individuals will sign the DSW Oath of Office identified in the Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Oaths taken by elected or appointed officials shall be filed with the County Clerk. ([Gov. Code, § 1363\(a\)\(2\).](#))

Employees Working Hybrid or Remote:

Hybrid and Remote employees will follow the Hybrid Remote Work Policy ([Santa Barbara County Policy 2.1.31](#)). Hybrid and remote employees are still expected to respond as California Disaster Service Workers in times of an emergency. In accordance with the policy, “in the case of an employee needing to respond in person to serve as a DSW, the employee is responsible for all of their associated housing and/or transportation needs and the costs incurred during the declared emergency.”

Section 2: Emergency Response and Activation

Purpose:

There are many components to the preservation of life, property, and the environment at the onset of an emergency. The following policy outlines how employees will be notified and activated during an emergency as well as processes to communicate should an employee be unable to fulfill their DSW responsibility.

Reporting Requirements

1. In the event of an emergency that has NOT been proclaimed:
 - a. The Director of Emergency Services (DES)/County Executive Officer, Assistant County Executive Officer (ACEO), Director of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), or an OEM Emergency Manager will notify departments and/or preassigned employees of the activation of disaster response and support services.
 - b. All employees will follow their respective department’s policy and emergency procedures, which may include reporting to work or contacting their supervisor to check in.
 - c. If an employee does not believe they can or should report for their assignment, reference “Employee Circumstances for Not Reporting” below.
2. In the event of an emergency that HAS been proclaimed:
 - a. The California Government Code (Sections 3100 – 3109) and the Santa Barbara County Code (Chapter 12) outlines the responsibility to report to work when an emergency proclamation is made.
 - i. The County Executive Officer (DES during a proclaimed emergency), or designated ACEO has the authority to direct all County employees to report to work locations, either to perform their regular duties or to provide emergency services.
 - ii. Some Department Heads have authority to direct their individual department employees to report to work aside from the authorities of the CEO as defined in Chapter 12, such as sworn law enforcement officers or firefighters.
3. In accordance with California [Labor Code § 1139\(b\)\(2\)\(A\)](#), the County will not prevent any Disaster Service Worker from accessing their mobile device during an emergency for “seeking emergency assistance, assessing the safety of the situation, or communicating with a person to verify their safety.”

Employee Circumstances for Not Reporting as a Disaster Service Worker

Occasionally, the circumstances of an emergency may impact an employee directly, prevent an employee from reporting to their normal or assigned location, or they may feel it is necessary to stay home. **It is each department’s discretion to verify and approve leave based on circumstances at the time of the emergency. The department maintains responsibility to provide staff to fill assigned positions on the Master EOC Team Roster.**

Allowable considerations for not reporting as a Disaster Service Worker:

1. Taking care of one’s family and home situation is a priority for the County and is important for the employee to be in a good place to assist others. When an emergency occurs, all employees are encouraged to ensure the needs of their family/home are met prior to reporting to work.

- a. An employee may feel that for personal reasons they are unable to report to work. Examples of allowable personal reasons MAY include: death of a family member, ongoing medical treatment needs or illness, impact from the emergency that has led to loss of personal effects including a home or vehicle, responsibility to care for one's family who are affected.
2. There may be circumstances in which an employee is physically unable to report to work due to impacts to transportation or other critical infrastructure.
 - a. A general statement on the radio or television that says that people are discouraged from driving on public roads or that people should not leave their homes or work locations due to hazardous conditions is not to be construed as authorization not to report to work.
3. If the inability to report to work is due to a County building or facility being non-operational due to an emergency or disruption, the Department Head will initiate their Department Continuity of Operations Plan. Employees may then be asked to report to an alternative location.

Section 3: DSW EOC & Field Employee Assignments

Purpose:

Many County employees have been preassigned to a role within the Emergency Operations Center, a Department Operations Center, or the field. Employees who have not been preassigned may be assigned based on the emergency and unmet needs. In some cases, it may be necessary to stage equipment and personnel prior to an official activation.

Policy:

1. The Office of Emergency Management has pre-identified the potential positions needed for the EOC and disaster care facilities. Under the CEO's Authority in County Code Chapter 12, Departments have been assigned responsibility for specific positions, and depth of position staffing. These positions and department assignments are in the Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Standard Operating Procedure, within the Master Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team Roster.
2. Each Department Head shall:
 - a. Identify specific employees to be assigned positions within the Master EOC Team Roster, and report to OEM those specific employees assigned, as well as their after-hours contact information. Employees so assigned will be notified of their assigned positions. Changes will be communicated to OEM as soon as they occur.
 - b. Department Heads have the responsibility to ensure they have adequate number of trained employees and resources to fulfill all assigned positions, with the ability to fulfill multiple shifts. During an emergency, this may require departments to begin staging personnel and equipment for multiple shifts to meet any increasing or prolonged incident support needs.
 - c. Establish and communicate department specific procedures or policies to employees that explain what employees should do in the event of a declared emergency (i.e. when to report, procedure for contacting their supervisor, what their EOC or response assignment is, alternate work location, etc.)
 - d. Ensure employees have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to respond in the event of an emergency, including providing staff time for position specific training and validating that all required EOC trainings have been completed.
3. In the event of an emergency, whether proclaimed or not, individuals pre-identified by their Department or County Leadership may be activated to report to their assigned position and shall do so immediately upon notification.

- a. If support needs cannot be met by the pre-identified resources, department or County leadership may identify additional employees that will be activated and are expected report to their assigned location immediately upon notification.
- 4. County employees and departments may be asked or directed to fulfill any position, not just those pre-assigned, that is needed to ensure the preservation of life, property, and the environment in Santa Barbara County.
 - a. Employees assigned to a position outside of their normal work assignment will be provided just-in-time training to ensure safety of all employees.

Section 4: DSW Training Requirements

Purpose

To provide for the safety of County employees while they serve as Disaster Service Workers; to strengthen the understanding of role(s) County employees may be expected to fulfil during an emergency; to expand response capabilities within the County organization and; to ensure compliance with state and federal training requirements in alignment with the Standardize Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), adopted by the Board of Supervisors September 15, 2009.

Policy

When employees are properly trained and understand their role during an emergency it strengthens the response of the County and can provide greater opportunities for disaster response cost reimbursements. Compliance with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) training criteria is required to qualify for grant funding and FEMA reimbursement following a disaster. In alignment with the County Board of Supervisor's Resolution 09-251, which adopted the National Incident Management System on September 15, 2009, County employees must meet the NIMS standards for training.

- 1. Required SEMS, NIMS and EOC trainings are based on an employee's day-to-day position, as well as any pre-designated emergency assignments. All County employees, regardless of department, are required to complete trainings associated with their job classification and Disaster Service Worker role.
 - a. OEM is responsible for identifying what trainings are required and recommended, as well as providing (directly or through external resources) required training elements for County employees.
 - b. Specific trainings are identified and will be updated in the "Disaster Service Worker Training Matrix" as part of the DSW Standard Operating Procedure.
- 2. OEM in coordination with Human Resources will provide a centralized tracking system for county-wide employee compliance with identified and required trainings associated with this policy.
- 3. County DSW training will include at minimum:
 - a. SEMS and NIMS required trainings:
 - i. To be completed as part of all new employee onboarding processes,
 - ii. And to be updated every 5 years;
 - b. EOC Assigned Staff:
 - i. In addition to NIMS and SMES training, these staff will complete positions specific training.
 - ii. Position specific training, will be completed within a reasonable timeframe from being assigned, not to exceed 1 year.
 - iii. Position specific training will be completed every two years, and participate in 1 exercise every 2 years.
 - c. EOC associated Field Assigned Staff:
 - i. In addition to NIMS and SMES training, these staff will complete positions specific training.

- ii. Position specific training, will be completed within a reasonable timeframe from being assigned, not to exceed 1 year.
 - d. Elected Officials
 - i. OEM Elected Official Training within 1 year of taking office.
 - e. Other required and recommended emergency response training based on employee's day to day assigned role.
- 4. It is the responsibility of Department Heads to ensure that ALL department employees have completed required trainings in accordance with this policy, the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
 - a. Departments will provide adequate time within an employee's normal schedule to complete required trainings.
 - b. Management Employee Performance Review will include the requirement to ensure all direct reports have completed required training.
- 5. The Office of Emergency Management will:
 - a. Provide notification of or conduct ongoing Emergency Operations Center training and exercises for employees and Operational Area Partners.
 - b. Work to identify and obtain trainings that would aid in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disaster.
 - c. Serve as a continued resource for ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements for training.

Section 5: Emergency Cost Tracking

Purpose

To establish accounting code(s) to track employee time and other costs associated with County emergency response and recovery activities.

Policy

This policy will be implemented for any emergency in which resources are ordered or County employees are reassigned from day to day responsibilities to support emergency response operations, as described in the County of Santa Barbara Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan and the Santa Barbara County and Operational Area Disaster Care and Shelter Plan. This includes tracking costs for any planned or coordinated responses within or outside of the County.

When the Emergency Operations Center is activated, the EOC Finance Section Coordinator, OEM Duty Officer, or OEM Department Business Specialist will request the establishment of an accounting code from the Auditor-Controller's Office.

When the EOC is not activated but an accounting code is deemed appropriate by the Office of Emergency Management, a Department Head, or an Assistant Department Head, they will request an emergency accounting code from the Auditor-Controller.

Emergency accounting codes will be used when any of the following apply:

- a. When an event is deemed highly likely to occur and preparation is made to activate the EOC, a DOC, resources are mobilized, or evacuations may be initiated;
- b. Anytime a department activates its Department Operations Center (DOC);
- c. Anytime the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated;
- d. Anytime the Countywide Continuity of Operations Plan activated or if a Continuity of Operations event has a significant impact to even department operations;
- e. When Care and Shelter operations are initiated for any emergency; and/or
- f. Mutual Aid requests and resources are sent outside of the County for emergency preparedness, response, or recovery activities.

The Auditor-Controller will issue a Countywide communication notifying Disaster Service Workers of the accounting code with applicable guidance on its use and required supporting documentation. The Auditor-Controller will answer any questions related to use of the accounting code.

Additional Hours/Overtime

Employees involved in emergency response and recovery may need to work additional hours beyond their normal work schedule in order to accomplish emergency response activities. Department Heads should authorize overtime for all activated Disaster Service Workers assigned to the emergency and ensure Timesheet Supervisors are aware of this authorization.

[Santa Barbara County Code of Ordinances Sec. 27-3](#) provides for additional compensation for some exempt employees during an emergency duly declared in writing by the board of supervisors, or by the County Executive Officer or designees.

For more detailed information and procedures related to the policies contained in this section please see relevant chapters in the [County Finance Unit Disaster Manual](#) which is available on the Auditor-Controller Intranet Policies/Procedures page.

For information regarding emergency overtime please review the Labor Agreement that applies to your current job classification. These can be found on the [Human Resources Bargaining Units, Labor Agreements Page](#).

Section 6: Disaster Cost Recovery for DSW Costs

Purpose

To provide a policy and process for County departments to seek emergency response DSW associated costs, and to mitigate budget impacts of supporting emergency response operations, to the extent possible. This policy establishes a process for departments to seek federal and state reimbursement for DSW costs related to an event, and if no other funding from any other source is available, to seek reimbursement from the General Fund as a last resort.

Policy

All time associated with training Disaster Service Worker employees, required to maintain a state of readiness, will be the responsibility of the department and should be coded following the departmental procedures associated with training.

During an emergency, all County employees are considered Disaster Service Workers (DSW) and are at the disposal of the County Executive Officer as the Director of Emergency Services. It is recognized that to effectively respond to an emergency, departmental budgets can be negatively impacted due to employee and overtime costs as well as other expenditures. Recognizing that County departments have annual approved budgets, and multiple funding sources, sometimes with restrictions, department fiscal impacts will be considered as follows:

1. Department Heads will ensure their employees are using appropriate established emergency fiscal codes and completing required paperwork daily.
2. Initial response costs will be incurred by the employee's home department.
3. The CEO Budget Division will support and coordinate state and federal reimbursement processes on behalf of the County.
 - a. Departments are responsible for tracking, submitting, and seeking cost recovery from appropriate FEMA or CalOES state and federal sources, when available. This is the first pathway for reimbursement of costs for departments. Eligible employee costs typically include:
 - i. Overtime only, for most employees.
 - ii. Straight-time and Overtime Costs for permanent employees funded from an external source if assigned to perform eligible Emergency Work that the external source does not fund.
 - b. If state or federal reimbursement timelines creates a cashflow issue for the department, the CEO Budget Division will consider requests for a General Fund loan until reimbursement is received.

4. Departments are responsible for tracking their reassigned employees who are normally funded through restricted revenue sources with a specific purpose (restricted Proprietary {Internal Service and Enterprise} Funds, or Grant, state or federal Funding). Reimbursement of these funds will be as follows:
 - a. The department shall seek waivers from the appropriate agencies for funding source restrictions, when appropriate during an emergency;
 - b. If no exceptions are made, then the department will seek state and federal emergency reimbursement.
5. If the above noted funding options are not available, General Fund appropriations will be considered as follows:
 - a. Department's General Fund fiscal year salary cost savings are fully allocated; and
 - b. The department can identify special circumstances that create a fiscal burden necessitating General Fund appropriations;
 - c. Then the CEO Budget Division will consider a request for General Fund reimbursement or appropriations.
6. CEO Budget Division will determine how DSW and emergency response costs will be covered and funded within the General Fund.

5. REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

[Hybrid Remote Work Policy](#) (Santa Barbara County Policy 2.1.31)

[County Finance Unit Disaster Manual](#)

6. REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	CHANGE	EDITOR	DATE
2.0	Significantly updates the original policy to better aligning with current operations and regulations.	S. Silva Y. Torres G. Milligan J. Sturz E. Teyber	December 6, 2023