



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 Disaster Service Worker Employee Policy

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Human Resources

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve the revised Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Policy (Attachment A) which sets forth the County's Disaster Services Work (DSW) Program, including response requirements, training, and cost tracking and recovery; 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:

This item is before the Board to approve an update to the Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker (DSW) employee policy. The *Santa Barbara County Policy for Employees in the Event of a Declared Emergency/ Natural Disaster/ Inclement Weather* was approved in December 1997 (Attachment A). The purpose of the policy was to establish how Santa Barbara County Employees are expected to respond when emergencies impact lives, property, and the environment of Santa Barbara County residents and visitors. This proposed policy update (Attachment B) enhances the previous policy by better aligning with

current regulations, best practices, as well as lessons learned from previous disasters. Staff recommends your Board approve the updated policy replacing the December 1997 policy in its entirety.

Background:

The County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for drafting plans and policies, providing training, coordinating staff for the County Emergency Operation Center and other support functions, and communicating with County Departments and outside agencies to facilitate coordinated responses to emergency situations that threaten or impact the County of Santa Barbara. OEM staff have been working to update over two dozen plans and policies to better align with current laws and best practices, as well as lessons learned from previous disasters. Through these efforts it was identified that the current Disaster Service Worker Policy is lacking important details and predates many local, state, and federal regulations that ensure the County is positioned to adequately plan for, respond to and recover from disasters. The Office of Emergency Management, Human Resources Department, Auditor Controller Department, County Executive Office, and Risk Management worked together to update the policy which required significant changes for clarification and consistency with other county policies, local, state, and federal regulations, and best practices.

Discussion:

Protecting the public health and well-being of County residents is a top priority. Services provided by County employees are an important element in ensuring the health and safety of Santa Barbara County residents. During emergency events, County employees may be called to act as Disaster Service Workers (DSW) to better meet the needs of the community and ensure the continuity of essential services. Per [California Government Code section 3100-3109](#), “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 “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.” 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. This policy outlines the responsibilities of all County employees as Disaster Service Workers to participate in training and respond to emergencies as directed, as well as clarifies departments’ ability to seek reimbursement for employee response costs.

The Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Policy has been expanded to include:

- General Disaster Service Worker Policy
- Emergency Response and Activation
- DSW EOC & Field Employee Assignments
- DSW Training Requirements
- Emergency Cost Tracking
- Disaster Cost Recovery for DSW Costs

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.)

It would be amiss not to recognize the many dedicated Santa Barbara County employees that respond willingly to any emergency impacting the County. Thank you to all our employees who work hard every day to support the residents of Santa Barbara County. Together we are building a stronger, safer, and more resilient County. Approval of this policy will set forth the County's commitment to enhance the readiness of our organization to respond to and recover from emergencies through clear expectations, trainings, and processes.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There are no specific costs associated with the approval of this policy. However, the policy does formalize the concept that each department bare costs associated with training and memorializes the existing a process for departments to pursue reimbursement of DSW staff costs during an incident or disaster.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: The Santa Barbara County Policy for Employees in the Event of a Declared Emergency/
Natural Disaster/ Inclement Weather.
- Attachment B: Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Employee Policy.
- Attachment C: Standard Operating Procedures for the Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker
Employee Policy.

Authored by:

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