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**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
COUNTYWIDE POLICY MANUAL**

SUBJECT:	EMPLOYEE LODGING DURING EMERGENCIES	ITEM NUMBER:	XX-XXXX
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	FIRE (OEM)	APPROVAL DATE:	
APPROVER(S):	BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	REVIEW DATE:	
MEET AND CONFER OBLIGATION	THE POLICY WAS CIRCULATED TO EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS IN JANUARY 2024. THE COUNTY HAS EXECUTED THE OBLIGATION TO MEET AND CONFER WITH ALL LABOR GROUP(S) WHO EXPRESSED INTEREST.		
SCOPE OF APPLICATION	THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES, EXCEPT MEMBERS OF THE DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION AND SHERIFFS' MANAGERS ASSOCIATION.		
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**1. PURPOSE**

To establish clear guidance on lodging for employees who are unable to return home due to emergencies in order to provide equitable, appropriate, and safe accommodations. Historically, emergencies have impacted County employees from being able to return home requiring arrangements to be made, which varied widely from department to department.

**2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all County departments and is applicable to all employees both assigned to the emergency response efforts or impacted as a result of the emergency with exception of the Santa Barbara County Deputy Sheriff's Association and Sheriff's Management Association.

**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.
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.

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 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. For the purpose of this policy emergency response staff includes any employee assigned a specific role in supporting the emergency including the emergency operations center or field-based activities.
Extreme Weather	Includes National Weather Service announcements that create a safety risk for employees, especially on roadways. This includes but is not limited to Flood Advisories/Warnings and Winter Storm Watches/Warnings.
Congregate Sheltering	Sheltering provided in a large open space with other displaced/impacted employees. Provisions of a congregate shelter include individual sleeping areas/cots, secure access, and restroom access.
Non-Congregate Lodging	Sheltering provided in private or semi-private area such as hotel/motel rooms, vacation rentals, cabins, rvs, etc.

#### 4. POLICY

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It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. Department Heads shall have a plan in place to allow for employees to work remote or at the departmental facility closest to the employee’s home, or to adjust their work schedule, when extreme weather is predicted or other forecasted events could impact employees from getting home from their designated work location.
  - a. Employees identified and assigned to an essential function within their Department’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) may be required to report and should do so prior to the period of concern.
  - b. Department Heads are responsible for being aware of potential risks and notifying employees that they are authorized to adjust locations or schedules as planned.
2. In the event employees are unable to get home from work due to disaster impacts, such as unsafe road conditions or road closures, Department Heads shall notify the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Personnel Unit [EOCstaffing@countyofsb.org](mailto:EOCstaffing@countyofsb.org) and the EOC Safety Officer [EOCMgtSafety@countyofsb.org](mailto:EOCMgtSafety@countyofsb.org) of such conditions.
  - a. The notification should include general information about the employee(s), the locations that are being used, whether lodging is being requested for their employees, the number of employees, and what area the employees are in.
3. The following are options for employee lodging during emergencies:
  - a. The County will provide lodging options to employees upon request by the Department Head.

- b. Employees can check with coworkers, friends, and family that may be able to provide temporary lodging.
  - c. Department Heads may authorize employees to shelter in a County facility as a last resort if a sheltering plan has been established.
    - i. Ideally the location will have an area or room within the facility that locks, restroom access within the building, and is an area that the employee already has security access should they need to come and go for any reason (i.e. meals.)
    - ii. If the office is a shared space with external agencies, prior coordination should be facilitated by the department.
    - iii. In the event staff are staying at a County facility, the Department Head or their designee may request security support through the EOC.
4. Lodging options: lodging for employees during emergencies will be coordinated through the Emergency Operations Center, Logistics Section.
- a. Disaster Service Workers may be provided non-congregate lodging when approved by the Director of Emergency Services, or designee, and available, with priority consideration for field-responders coming off shift based on the severity of the field conditions.
  - b. If non-congregate lodging is not approved or available, congregate lodging will be provided.
  - c. For employees who are not activated or assigned to the emergency, the Director of Emergency Services, or designee, will determine whether congregate or non-congregate lodging will be provided.
5. The County Director of Emergency Services or their designee must approve all employee non-congregate lodging in advance of any reservation or payment.
- a. Should a Department Head choose to reserve non-congregate lodging without approval of the County Director of Emergency Services, the department will bear the responsibility for cost associated with hoteling their employees.
  - b. This policy has no bearing on Mutual Aid Agreements or outside contracts that may specify terms and conditions for lodging.

5. REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

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Santa Barbara County Disaster Service Worker Policy for Employees  
EOC Finance Unit Manual

6. REVISION HISTORY

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VERSION	CHANGE	EDITOR	DATE
1.0	Describe the changes made.		Approval date