



# San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services: Post-San Bruno Fire Self-Evaluation

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## Issue

As a result of the natural gas pipeline explosion on September 9, 2010 in San Bruno, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) filed an *After Action/Corrective Action Report* reviewing its performance with the State of California. Did OES (1) effectively record all areas for improvement; (2) implement the solutions identified in the report; (3) meet the estimated completion dates; and (4) utilize the report as a tool to identify areas for improvement, establish accountability, and ensure follow-up? What other improvements to the Office of Emergency Services are necessary?

## Summary

The September 9, 2010 catastrophic natural gas pipeline explosion in San Bruno, California required a large-scale, county-wide response. Multiple agencies and disciplines (fire, police, emergency services, hospitals, and the Red Cross) worked together during this disaster, among the worst in San Mateo County's history. The event resulted in the tragic loss of eight lives, a range of serious and permanent injuries to 66 residents, the total destruction of 38 homes, damage to an additional 62 homes, and the destruction of infrastructure. Approximately \$55 million in private property damage was incurred in addition to \$70 million in damages to public infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) responded at the outset to coordinate assignments and equipment deliveries, notify residents to evacuate the affected area, support the public information effort, activate and staff the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), assist with processing aid applications and provide overall support to San Bruno citizens and public safety officers throughout the emergency and recovery stage of the episode.

The State of California declared a State of Emergency for San Mateo County on September 10, 2010. As a result, the County was required to complete and submit to the State an After Action/Corrective Action Report (AA/CA Report) to document response activities, identify problems/successes during the response effort, and define action plans for implementing improvements. The AA/CA Report identified 13 items for improvement.<sup>2</sup> The Grand Jury

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<sup>1</sup> After Action/Corrective Action Report, City of San Bruno EOC Preliminary Report, December 27, 2010. The infrastructure damage estimate was set in a negotiated trust fund between San Bruno and Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the operator of the pipeline. Those monies will go to rebuild streets, sewer lines and other municipal property damaged in the explosion. See, San Francisco Chronicle, February 18, 2012, *Sorry isn't enough, PG&E* at p.A11.

<sup>2</sup> See, Attachment 1, *After Action/Corrective Action Report – Potential Corrective Actions*, January 7, 2011. One of the items originally listed (Item 13) required RIMS retraining to the OES staff by December 2011. However, after the AA/CA report was submitted, it was decided that RIMS procedures would be reviewed and updated resulting in no retraining before the procedures update was completed. As of February 2012 no RIMS retraining has been conducted.

conducted interviews, reviewed documents, and made site visits during its investigation of the 13 items to determine if they were implemented and completed on a timely basis.

The Grand Jury found that nine of the 13 items were not completed according to their estimated completion date and seven of those were still incomplete as of January 2012. Item 13 was found to be non-applicable because the Response Information Management System (RIMS) is being replaced. The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff require the OES to revise its AA/CA Report guidelines to include a formal follow-up procedure to measure progress and completion of improvement plans.

The Grand Jury also recommends that OES meet with the local chapter of the American Red Cross to mutually develop a plan for obtaining identity information collected by the Red Cross at the emergency site. Finally, the Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and Sheriff's Office take all necessary steps to establish a fully-equipped and functional County Emergency Office Center (EOC) within 180 days. The current Jury Assembly Room in the Hall of Justice is designated as the primary EOC for large-scale emergency coordination. However, the Grand Jury finds that it is unsuitable as a primary EOC due to its daily use by hundreds of citizens, extremely limited cell phone receptivity, lack of adequate "hardline" telephone connections, and lack of existing electronic hardware. In a county of nearly 750,000 citizens, located in a recognized earthquake zone, large-scale emergencies require a fully-equipped coordination site for emergency services.

The Grand Jury highly commends the dedicated performance of all public and private service employees (fire, police, Sheriff's Deputies, Red Cross, emergency providers, volunteers) on September 10 and for months thereafter. The City of San Bruno also singled out the County Director of Communications, who served as the Public Information Officer (PIO), and the County OES District Coordinator for their exemplary performance assisting San Bruno during the emergency and recovery phases of the incident. We owe all of them our thanks.

## **Background**

### **Emergency and Response**

On September 9, 2010, at about 6:11 p.m., a massive explosion and fire fueled by a ruptured natural gas pipeline spread through the Glenview area in San Bruno. The Glenview fire was among the worst disasters in San Bruno and County history in terms of loss of life, injuries, and property damage. With more than 500 firefighters and police officers responding, and approximately 400 homes evacuated, the State of California declared a State of Emergency for San Mateo County on September 10, 2010.

At 6:21 p.m., the San Bruno Fire Department immediately "sized up the situation and established the Glenview Command at the San Bruno Avenue and Glenview Avenue and requested mutual aid."<sup>3</sup> The San Bruno Police Department established a law command post at 6:46 pm and the City activated its emergency operations center to support the Glenview Incident Command Post

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<sup>3</sup> After Action/Corrective Action Report, City of San Bruno Preliminary Report, December 27, 2010.

(ICP), which was concurrently set up at the incident site.<sup>4</sup> At approximately 7:09 p.m., the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) activated its Operational Area EOC near the same location to support San Bruno's efforts and to allocate County resources assigned to the incident response. OES also activated its EOC in the Sheriff's Office at 555 County Center, Redwood City at 6:17 p.m. The Sheriff's OES activated the Telephone Emergency Notification System at 7:47 pm to send a voice message to the homes within three quarters of a mile of the Glenview/Earl intersection instructing voluntary evacuation.<sup>5</sup>

From September 9, 2010 through September 12, 2010, the City of San Bruno maintained a shelter for displaced residents, supported by the Red Cross and various County agencies. OES assisted in setting up a Local Assistance Center to enable State, County, City and non-profit agencies to offer services to affected residents. Due to the involvement of the public utility, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and the loss of life and property, the disaster received nationwide media attention. Public Information Officers (PIOs) and other County employees were assigned to assist with communication activities in order to provide accurate, consistent information. The San Bruno emergency operations remained fully operational to support the Incident Command Post for two weeks and transitioned to a duty officer on September 21, 2010.<sup>6</sup> The County deactivated its EOC on September 13, 2010 and assigned a Liaison Officer to San Bruno's Command Staff to coordinate County resources as needed and to assist the San Bruno City Manager in the preparation of the City of San Bruno EOC Preliminary Report of December 27, 2010. The recovery and rebuilding efforts still continue over a year and a half later.

### **Functions Performed by San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services during the San Bruno Emergency**

On September 10, 2010 and thereafter, the OES performed the following functions in response to the San Bruno emergency:

#### **Onset Response:**

- Helped establish an Incident Command System at two sites in San Bruno
- Set up EOC at the Sheriff's Office at 555 County Road, Redwood City
- Coordinated assignments and equipment deliveries from the County and other agencies
- Activated the Telephone Emergency Notification System to instruct residents to evacuate
- Activated the SMC Alert System to inform County staff of incident

#### **On-Going Response:**

- Coordinated daily EOC staff meetings and briefings with San Bruno and County and State emergency management agencies

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<sup>4</sup> The purpose of an EOC is to facilitate a coordinated response by the Director of Emergency Services, the emergency staff, and agency representatives from outside organizations. The ICP is used by the incident Commanders from responsible agencies (fire, law, etc.) to manage the incident. EOC Handbook and Checklist, page 2.

<sup>5</sup> After Action/Corrective Action Report, Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services, January 7, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> After Action/Corrective Action Report, City of San Bruno Preliminary Report, December 27, 2010.

- Coordinated all County agencies active at the scene
- Assisted in opening and operating the Local Assistance Center for disaster victims
- Worked with San Bruno and the State to make applications for aid from FEMA and the California Disaster Assistance Act<sup>7</sup>
- Provided OES personnel to support San Bruno through the initial recovery phase that lasted until October 12, 2010.<sup>8</sup>

### **San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services**

The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) provides a variety of emergency services to the cities of San Mateo County. Within the OES office, there are 11 employees: one Sheriff's Lieutenant, one Supervising Coordinator, four District Coordinators, two Sheriff's Sergeants, one Deputy Sheriff, one Fiscal Office Specialist, and one Storekeeper. One of the District Coordinators is a part-time employee.

The OES also has several units with specialized skills, mostly staffed by volunteers.<sup>9</sup> The SWAT team is not a volunteer unit, but a team composed of sworn members of the Sheriff's office. Many of the unit members are certified in emergency medical response and assist other public safety officers across the County in providing situational care and protection for the citizens of San Mateo County.

#### **Additional OES Units with Specialized Skills**

- Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT)
- Dive/Cliff/Marine Unit
- \*Air Squadron
- \*Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit (BAMRU)
- \*Communication Unit
- \*Explorer Post 810 (Law Enforcement)
- \*Search and Rescue 830 (Search and Rescue)
- \*Mounted Search and Rescue
- \*San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Search and Technical Team

\*Involved in the San Bruno emergency efforts.

The OES also provides regular coordinated emergency planning and training services to the 20 cities and towns within the County and a wide variety of support and resources to assist cities in dealing with disaster and other emergency situations. The OES maintains an amateur radio repeater for use by the amateur radio community.

<sup>7</sup> [www.calema.CA.gov/.../California-Disaster-assistance-Act-\(CDAA\).aspx](http://www.calema.CA.gov/.../California-Disaster-assistance-Act-(CDAA).aspx)

<sup>8</sup> Equipment deliveries included shelter trailers, generators, security/road closure barricades, mobile lighting units, Mobile Communications Units, radios, batteries, portable toilets, mobile hand-washing units, personal protective equipment, water, etc. provided by OES. Personnel assignments coordinated by OES included the following entities: Sheriff's Office, Co/Cal Fire, Public Works, Health and Human Services, District Attorney's Office, County Manager's Office, County Animal Control, Emergency Services Coordinators from cities/special districts throughout the County. (Per email from OES, January 7, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> <http://smcdirectory.cosanmateo.ca.us/searchUsersForm.html>.

The OES is funded and governed by the Emergency Services Council through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that includes the 20 cities and towns and the County of San Mateo. The cities and towns of the JPA contribute money to fund the JPA based upon a formula that takes into account the population and average assessed property value of each. The County then matches the funds contributed by the cities and towns. The remainder of the OES budget comes from State and Federal Emergency Management Assistance program funds.<sup>10</sup> The budget for OES in 2010-2011 was \$1,285,846.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Current Location of the Primary Emergency Operations Center in San Mateo County**

The County's primary EOC is the Jury Assembly Room located in the basement of the Hall of Justice in Redwood City. This location is used for serious and prolonged emergencies, and overrides everyday use by the Superior Courts. The Jury Assembly Room, while spacious, is clearly sub-optimal for emergency services use. At minimum, usage requires spontaneous relocation of personnel, office and electronic equipment, and operation manuals from other buildings. The subterranean location has severely limited telephone and cell phone coverage, and no dedicated EOC functionality. During the Glenview emergency, the OES utilized the alternate EOC, a smaller, dedicated fully equipped room in a County Office Building at 555 County Center.

### **Red Cross Involvement in the San Bruno Emergency**

The OES and the American Red Cross work together to assure organization, readiness, and response to an emergency. At Glenview, the Red Cross immediately opened a shelter at the nearby Bayhill Shopping Center and welcomed all who needed help with food and shelter. A representative from the Red Cross registered each person who entered the shelter and took personal information such as name, address, family members to contact and medical issues. Each registered person received a confidentiality statement from Red Cross acknowledging the Red Cross' agreement to keep the registered person's information confidential. This statement reads in part:

The relationships between the American Red Cross and the people who come to the American Red Cross for disaster relief services are confidential. Safeguarding the trust of our clients is an important part of the organization's obligation to the people and communities it serves. All American Red Cross employees and volunteers will observe the principle of confidentiality in obtaining, using, protecting and releasing information about American Red Cross clients.<sup>12</sup>

The confidentiality statement restricted the Red Cross from disclosing the identities of those in Red Cross care and hindered attempts by public safety officers to locate residents and to know that all residences were vacated.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.sheriff.com/divisions/operations-division>.

<sup>11</sup> This is exclusive of outside funding of \$215, 833 and the Hazardous Material Program of the budget, per OES email dated January 13, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> American Red Cross Shelter Registration Form 5972, Revision February 2007 and Red Cross Commitment to Confidentiality, May 2007

## **Radio Shop Involvement in the San Bruno Emergency**

The County Radio Shop, which is run by the Information Services Department, is responsible for the direct distribution of its emergency backup radios to agencies or persons in need.<sup>13</sup> The radios are intended for short-term use during the disaster phase of the incident. During the recovery phase of the Glenview explosion, the County Health Department requested radios to be used to survey the neighborhood. Since this was outside of the immediate disaster phase, that request was denied.

## **Declaration of Emergency/The After Action/Corrective Action Report**

The City Manager of San Bruno and the County Manager each declared a local state emergency and the State followed with its declaration of a state of emergency on September 10, 2010. The declaration of a state of emergency required OES to file its AA/CA Report with the Coastal Region Office of the California Emergency Management Agency (CAL EMA) on January 7, 2011, in compliance with the procedures and regulations of the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) regulation Section 2450(a).

Section 2450(a) of the SEMS regulations states:

...Any city, city and county, or county declaring a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, and any state agency responding to that emergency shall complete and transmit an after action report to [the State of California] OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident as specified in the California Code of Regulations, section 2900(j).<sup>14</sup>

San Mateo County's revised "Operational Area" Emergency Operations Plan, which was released on January 28, 2011, included the above SEMS requirement.<sup>15</sup>

The AA/CA Report is designed to fulfill the following criteria:

- Provide a source for documenting response and early recovery activities;
- Identify problems and successes during emergency operations;
- Analyze the effectiveness of the different components of SEMS; and
- Describe and define a plan of corrective action for implementing recommended improvements to existing emergency response efforts.<sup>16</sup>

As stated above, San Mateo County was required to file an AA/CA Report with the CAL EMA within the 90-day period. The report was due on December 7, 2010. An OES representative requested and received a thirty-day extension from CAL EMA. The AA/AC Report was filed on January 7, 2011, (*See*, Attachment 1).

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<sup>13</sup> Trunked Radio Cache Guidelines, August 2007

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/State%20Gov.%20Code/\\$file/StateBGovtCode](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/State%20Gov.%20Code/$file/StateBGovtCode).

<sup>15</sup> San Mateo County "Operational Area" Emergency Operations Plan; Released January 28, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> [http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep\\_after\\_corrective\\_action.aspx](http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep_after_corrective_action.aspx)

**Process Used to Create the AA/CA Report**

To initiate work on the AA/CA Report, the Sheriff’s OES called for a County department debriefing meeting to be held on November 23, 2010.<sup>17</sup>

The focus and attendees were as follows:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Date and Time: | Tuesday, November 23, 2010, from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon   |
| Focus:         | Gather input and feedback from a variety of individuals to create the required AA/CA report  |
| Attendees:     | Professionals from several different departments   |
|                | County Commands (County Manager, Public Information, Safety/Human Resources, and County Counsel)   |
|                | Representatives from the Sheriff’s Office, the Coroner’s Office, the EMS branch, the Public Safety Communications branch, the Health/Public/Environmental/Behavioral branch, the Care and Shelter branch, and Public Works |
|                | Representatives from the Planning Section, Logistics Section, and Finance  |
|                | The Assessor’s office  |
|                | The District Attorney’s office   |
|                | OES shared [sic] information about the Incident Command Post, the evacuation center, the San Bruno EOC, and the Emergency Operations activations   |

Based on the feedback from outside agencies and the debriefing notes (no formal meeting minutes were published), an OES Coordinator completed the AA/CA Report.<sup>18</sup> The report was filed with the State on January 7, 2011 and distributed to the County Manager’s Office, the County Communications Director, Supervisor Adrienne Tissier (representative of the Board of Supervisors on the Emergency Services Council), Public Safety Communications, and members of the media who requested it. The public distribution of the report was determined by expressed interest.

<sup>17</sup> San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Services September 9, 2010 Glenview Gas Pipeline Explosion and Fire County Department Debriefing for After Action Report and Improvement Plan, Agenda for Tuesday, November 23, 2010, 8:30 – 12:00 noon.

<sup>18</sup> OES emailed a questionnaire to some of the agencies to request feedback. OES unable to provide date the email questionnaire was sent and to whom. See, Attachment 2 – Incident Participant Form.

## Summary of the AA/CA Report

The required AA/CA Report filed by OES (Attachment 1) identified 13 potential corrective actions. Following is a summary of the AA/CA Report with issue, responsible agency, estimated completion date, and current status.

| #  | <i>Issue and Corrective Action Plan</i>   | <i>Agency Involved</i>     | <i>Estimated Completion Date (Met /Not Met?)</i> | <i>Current Status as of January 2012</i> |
|----|---|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1  | Continue to provide ICS-300 & 400 training; schedule EOC staff for ICS training   | OES<br>EOC Staff           | Dec 2011<br>Not Met                              | Incomplete                               |
| 2  | Continue multi-year training; continue to provide training to EOC staff   | OES<br>EOC Staff           | Dec 2011<br>Not Met                              | Incomplete                               |
| 3  | Integrate Red Cross into EOC structure; discuss info sharing with Red Cross.  | OES<br>Red Cross           | July 2011<br>Not Met                             | Incomplete                               |
| 4  | Develop large status boards for EOC; research and purchase status boards for EOC  | OES                        | July 2011<br>Not Met                             | Incomplete                               |
| 5  | Question use of current jury room as EOC; research alternate location for EOC; research cell phone connectivity options             | OES                        | Dec 2011<br>Not Met                              | Incomplete                               |
| 6  | Review Operational Area EOC awareness; change procedures to include SMC Alert   | OES                        | July 2011<br>Not Met                             | Complete                                 |
| 7  | Consider joint information center establishment at site; work with County PIO to schedule and conduct training                      | OES<br>County<br>PIO Group | July 2011<br>Not Met                             | Complete                                 |
| 8  | Research cell phone coverage at disaster site; research solutions to cell phone connectivity issues in major event                  | OES<br>Radio<br>Shop       | Dec 2011<br>Not Met                              | Incomplete                               |
| 9  | Continue scheduled training for more Planning Section Staff   | OES                        | Dec 2011<br>Met                                  | Complete                                 |
| 10 | Review Ham Operator activation; review procedure for activating/assigning Volunteer HAM to ICP or EOC; update procedures as needed. | OES                        | Dec 2011<br>Met                                  | Complete                                 |
| 11 | Clarify radio cache distribution; clarify radio distribution policy and modify if necessary.  | OES<br>Radio<br>Shop       | July 2011<br>Not Met                             | Incomplete                               |
| 12 | Activate finance section earlier; change policy to call all EOC sections to EOC upon an EOC activation.                             | OES                        | July 2011<br>Met                                 | Complete                                 |
| 13 | Provide RIMS training to the EOC staff. (Note: RIMS is being replaced)  | OES<br>EOC Staff           | Dec 2011   | N/A                                      |



## Investigation

The Grand Jury gathered and reviewed data from numerous sources including:

- Nineteen interviews with 14 members of the San Mateo County departments listed in the AA/CA Report (County Manager's Office, Information Services, Sheriff's Office, OES, Health & Human Services), and the American Red Cross, the City of San Bruno, and the San Bruno Police and Fire Departments. Interviewees included administrators, managers, supervisors, and staff of these entities/organizations.
- The required AA/CA Report filed by the County OES (Attachment 1) that identified 13 corrective actions. Item 13 was found to be non-applicable.
- The City of San Bruno's EOC Preliminary AA/CA Report, filed by the City of San Bruno Preliminary Report, December 27, 2010.
- Tours of the gas pipeline explosion area in the Glenview neighborhood in San Bruno, the Emergency Control Center in the OES office, and the Jury Assembly Room at the Courthouse in Redwood City.
- The Emergency Operations Center Handbook and Checklist (no published date)
- The SMC Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook (March 2007 and January 28, 2011 draft revision)
- The Sheriff's Office OES & Emergency Services Bureau Presentation, October 19, 2011
- Sheriff's Area OES Customer Service Questionnaire (2011)
- San Mateo County's Multiyear Training and Exercise Plans 2010-2011
- ICS-300 Student Manual, Unit 3, Unified Command (September 2005)
- Course descriptions and rosters for: Incident Command System (ICS) training (quarterly 2011), Joint Information Center Training (April 2011), Joint Commercial Aircraft Crash Exercise and Checklist (October 2011)
- Incident Command System training course student evaluations (August – November 2011)
- Agenda for After Action Report and Improvement Plan debriefing session November 23, 2010
- Written responses to follow-up interview questions from OES, Information Services and the County Manager's Office (October 2011- January 2012)

- San Mateo County Health System San Bruno Fire 2010 AAR/Improvement Plan, November 2010
- American Red Cross Commitment to Confidentiality document (exemplar - May 2007)
- American Red Cross Shelter Registration Form (exemplar – February 2007)
- Trunked Radio Cache Guidelines (August 2007)
- San Mateo County Emergency Operations Plan EOC Activation Appendix (December 2011)

## Findings

The Grand Jury finds that:

1. The AA/CA Report was due on December 7, 2010. OES requested and received a thirty-day extension from the Coastal Region Office of CAL EMA; a final AA/AC report was filed on January 7, 2011.
2. OES did not follow the recommended steps in the SMC “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists such as: conducting data gathering workshops to include key representatives of involved emergency response agencies; and the preparation/distribution of a draft AA/CA Report to the primary responders for review and approval.
3. OES conducted a debriefing session on November 23, 2010 in preparation of the AA/CA Report.
4. Representatives of San Bruno (police, fire, city management, emergency services) were neither invited nor included in the debriefing session held by OES on November 23, 2010.
5. The AA/CA Report filed by OES was not distributed to representatives of San Bruno police, fire, city management, or emergency services.
6. The San Mateo County “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists, which is currently in revision by OES, does not require a follow-up process to track progress and completion of improvement items.<sup>19</sup>
7. The task of compiling the information gathered from email questionnaires and the November 2010 debriefing meeting for the AA/CA Report was assigned to OES personnel within the Sheriff’s Office.
8. The OES Coordinator provided his superior with the final report for filing with the State and distribution to the County Manager’s Office, the County Communications Director, Supervisor Adrienne Tissier, Public Safety Communications, and members of the press who requested it.
9. The final AA/CA Report was not widely distributed; several of the individuals listed as a point of contact in the Report were unaware that their names were assigned to specific issues or problem statements, nor were they aware of the issues or problems identified within the Report.

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<sup>19</sup> SMC “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists, Joseph R. Horton, Jr., Section 3, Tab 2, March 2007

10. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates on the AA/CA Report, the OES completed three of the 13 corrective items (items 9, 10, 12) on time.<sup>20</sup>
11. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates identified in the AA/CA Report, the OES did not complete nine of the 13 corrective items (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11) on time.<sup>21</sup> Seven of those nine were still incomplete as of January 2012.
12. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates identified in the AA/CA Report, the OES found corrective item 13 to be non-applicable because the Response Information Management System (RIMS) training is being replaced.
13. The Primary EOC for the County is the Jury Assembly Room in the basement of the Hall of Justice in Redwood City, with the Alternate EOC located in the OES office on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the County Office Building at 555 County Center.
14. The Jury Assembly Room has no dedicated EOC functionality or equipment; it has no OES electronics, it has few phone lines and limited cell phone coverage.
15. The Jury Assembly Room is designated as the Primary EOC because it is the largest unclaimed (by other agencies) space in the Hall of Justice and can be emptied of civilians awaiting jury duty during regular business hours.

**With respect to the San Bruno Disaster and response by OES:**

16. A Joint Information Center (JIC) was not in place at the disaster site.
17. The County Health Department requested portable radios to use after the immediate disaster phase of the San Bruno incident; the Information Services Department's Radio Shop denied its request based on the requirements stated in the Trunked Radio Cache Guidelines.<sup>22</sup>
18. The AA/CA Report recommended white status boards be purchased to use in the EOC. These boards have not been acquired as of February 2012 due to "budget constraints." The cost of four status boards is approximately \$3,200.
19. Cell phone coverage at the fire scene was overloaded and spotty. OES acknowledges widespread use of mobile phones for official business. The contact person identified in the AA/CA Report for Item 8 was unaware that it was his responsibility to address this issue.

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<sup>20</sup> Attachment 1- After Action/Corrective Action Report - Potential Corrective Actions, January 7, 2011

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Trunked Cache Radio Guidelines, August 2007.

20. At the Red Cross shelter established at the Glenview site, each registered person was asked to sign a Red Cross statement outlining Red Cross' commitment to keep information confidential. Restrictions in the Red Cross confidentiality statement prevented the release of identities of persons under Red Cross care, which in turn impeded public safety officers attempting to determine if all residents had evacuated the disaster area.

## Conclusions

The Grand Jury concludes that:

1. The OES requires a more structured and integrated process for completion of an After Action/Corrective Action Report. Timely fulfillment of self-identified improvements is not assigned nor monitored carefully.
2. The AA/CA Report is a useful opportunity for the OES *and local agencies* to carefully think through together what worked and what could be improved in dangerous, time-sensitive circumstances.
3. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates in the AA/CA Report filed with the State of California, the OES had completed only 3 of the 12 items by the self-estimated date of completion.
4. Corrective action/improvement plan descriptions for Items 3, 5, and 8 on the AA/CA Report were vague (calling for discussion, research), making it difficult for the Grand Jury (and others) to assess progress and completion. Items 2 and 9 did not require any change from the normal process, making it unclear why each was identified as an area for improvement.
5. All improvement items identified in the Report were "internal agency specific" without broader implications for coordination with regional emergency management. This may be the result of limiting attendance at the data-collecting/debriefing conference to departments within San Mateo County, and excluding San Bruno representatives.
6. White boards, while costing \$3,200, are a necessary tool in a disaster to keep track of all stakeholders, agencies, and mutual aid.
7. One procedure described in the AA/CA Report (the Ham Operator procedure) did not exist as a written document. Another procedure (the emergency radio distribution policy) was unknown to the responsible contact and was difficult for the Grand Jury to obtain.
8. Communication at an emergency site among and between all agencies is absolutely critical for the safety of victims and public safety officers. Agencies should not be dependent on cell-phone coverage.

9. Due to the magnitude of the San Bruno disaster and the intense media and political interest, a Joint Information Center should have been established.
10. Given the fact that San Mateo County has approximately 750,000 residents spread over 449 square miles, and is a high-risk earthquake zone, the current primary EOC, the Jury Assembly Room in the basement of the Hall of Justice, is clearly inadequate for county-wide and/or prolonged emergencies.
11. The development of a San Mateo County Facilities Master Plan is underway; however, EOC relocation does not appear to be high on the priority list. There does not appear to be a real sense of urgency to relocate EOC to a site that is capable of immediately meeting the multi-level needs of a county-wide disaster such as a major earthquake, fire or airline crash.

## Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends to the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff:

1. Take all steps necessary to establish a fully-equipped and functional primary EOC within 180 days.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Emergency Services Council and the Sheriff require its Office of Emergency Services:

1. Within 45 days, revise the internal OES AA/CA Report guidelines to:<sup>23</sup>
  - a. Include a requirement to invite involved outside agencies (particularly from the cities, special districts, and the Red Cross) to participate in the data-gathering/debriefing conference.
  - b. Establish a formal follow-up, time-driven procedure to be conducted monthly to measure the progress and completion of the corrective action/improvement plans; and
  - c. Design a report distribution process for the dissemination of the AA/CA Report, at a minimum to all attendees of the Data Gathering Conference with specific attention to the individuals listed as “Contact Person.” The existence of the Report should be made known affirmatively to the press and general public to gain support for the challenges faced by OES.
2. Immediately direct that the OES escalate its professional attention to the importance and merit of the AA/CA exercise, and fully seek its value, instead of viewing the process, as one interviewee put it, “as a box-checking exercise.”

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<sup>23</sup> SMC “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklist, Joseph R. Horton, Jr., March 2007, Section 3, After Action Reports, Tab 2 and Draft Revision, OES, 2011

3. Within 60 days, meet with the Red Cross to develop and finalize a mutually satisfactory method for public safety officers to immediately obtain client *identity* information of those in Red Cross care at an emergency site.
4. Within 90 days, design and offer refresher training for Incident Command System (ICS)-300 and 400, clarify the cost issue with cities, and revise the course evaluation form to include a question asking participants what training OES can do that will keep public safety officers up-to-date and enable participants to respond more effectively during an emergency.
5. Within 120 days, in conjunction with the other responsible agencies, formalize the Joint Information Center procedures. Define the expectations, structure, roles, and function of the County Information officer, the City Information Officers, and the public agency Public Information Officers.
6. Within 30 days, purchase the status white boards for use during a county-wide emergency.
7. Within 90 days, design, upgrade and share processes and procedures with OES customer/supplier organizations and agencies such as the Radio Shop to update and communicate the Trunked Radio Cache Process. OES should also communicate with other County agencies like Health and Human Services to discuss their prospective roles in major emergencies.
8. Within 30 days, review and adhere to the recommended processes described in the San Mateo County “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists.<sup>24</sup>
9. On an on-going basis, identify and pursue grant funding for essential and non-essential items involved in the anticipated relocation of the EOC office.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

# Attachment 1

## AFTER ACTION/CORRECTIVE ACTION (AA/CA) REPORT

### POTENTIAL CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Identify issues, recommended solutions to those issues, and agencies that might be involved in implementing these recommendations. Address any problems noted in the SEMS/NIMS Function Evaluation.

Indicate whether issues are an internal agency specific or have broader implications for emergency management. (Code: I= Internal; R =Regional, for example, OES Mutual Aid Region, Administrative Regions, geographic regions, S=Statewide implications)

| Item # | Code | Issue or Problem Statement  | Corrective Action / Improvement Plan   | Agency(s)/ Depts. To Be Involved | Point of Contact Name / Phone | Estimated Date of Completion |
|--------|------|---|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1      | I    | Area for Improvement: Continue to provide ICS300 and ICS-400 training for EOC Staff and Department Heads  | Schedule EOC staff for ICS training in 2011  | OES<br>EOC Staff                 |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 2      | I    | Strength: Continue scheduled training as shown in the OES Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan   | Continue to provide training to the EOC staff  | OES<br>EOC Staff                 |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 3      | I    | Area for Improvement: Need to better integrate Red Cross into the EOC structure.  | Discuss information sharing with the Red Cross   | OES<br>Red Cross                 |                               | July 2011                    |
| 4      | I    | Area for Improvement: Develop large white board "Status Boards" for use in the EOC.   | Research and purchase status boards for the EOC  | OES                              |                               | July 2011                    |
| 5      | I    | Area For Improvement: Primary EOC (Jury Assembly Room) has no cell phone coverage. For this activation we used the Emergency Command Center (ECC) in the OES office. The primary EOC needs call phone connectivity. | Research alternate location for the primary EOC. Research alternate cell phone connectivity options. | OES                              |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 6      | I    | Area for Improvement: Ensure all agencies are made aware of when the Op Area EOC closes and concur with the decision.   | Change procedures to include using SMC Alert to notify others of the EOC status.                     | OES                              |                               | July 2011                    |



AFTER ACTION/CORRECTIVE ACTION (AA/CA) REPORT

| Item # | Code | Issue or Problem Statement   | Corrective Action / Improvement Plan   | Agency(s)/ Depts. To Be Involved | Point of Contact Name / Phone | Estimated Date of Completion |
|--------|------|--|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 7      | I    | Area for Improvement: Training in opening and operating a JIC will be conducted in the next year.  | Work with County PIO to schedule and conduct training  | OES<br>County PIO Group          |                               | July 2011                    |
| 8      | I    | Area for Improvement: Cell Phone coverage at the scene became overloaded, providing spotty coverage.   | Research solutions to cell phone connectivity issues in a major incident.  | OES<br>Radio Shop                |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 9      | I    | Strength: Planning Section staff was very competent and professional throughout the incident.  | Continue scheduled training as shown in the OES Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan                                      | OES                              |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 10     | I    | Area for Improvement: Communications between the ICP, EOC and Op Area EOC needs improvement. Ham radio would have been excellent for this task.                  | Review procedure for activating/assigning Volunteer Amateur Radio Operators to ICP or EOC and update procedures as needed. | OES                              |                               | Dec 2011                     |
| 11     | I    | Area for Improvement: Request for portable radios by the Health Department was denied by the radio shop. Need to clarify/modify policy regarding issuing radios. | Clarify radio distribution policy and modify if necessary.   | OES<br>Radio Shop                |                               | July 2011                    |
| 12     | I    | Area for Improvement: Activate the Finance Section as soon as the EOC is activated.  | Change policy to call all EOC sections to the EOC upon an EOC activation. We can later release those not needed.           | OES                              |                               | July 2011                    |
| 13     | I    | RIMS is difficult to use   | Provide RIMS training to the EOC staff   | OES<br>EOC Staff                 |                               | Dec 2011                     |

## Attachment 2

# Incident Participant Feedback Form

Glenview Fire, San Bruno, CA, September 9-13, 2010

**Your name, title and agency is optional**

Please enter your responses in the form field or check box after the appropriate selection.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** Field Response  EOC/DOC  Evacuation Area  Local Assistance Center (LAC)

### Part I: Recommendations and Corrective Actions

1. Based on my observations and experience at this incident the top three strengths and/or areas that need improvement.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify the action steps that should be taken to address the issues identified above. For each action step, indicate if it is a high, medium, or low priority.

| Corrective Action | Priority |
|-------------------|----------|
|                   |          |
|                   |          |
|                   |          |
|                   |          |
|                   |          |
|                   |          |

3. Describe any corrective actions that you feel that relate to your area of responsibility.

| Corrective Action |
|-------------------|
|                   |
|                   |
|                   |
|                   |
|                   |
|                   |

4. List the policies, plans, and procedures that should be reviewed, revised, or developed. Indicate the priority level for each.

| Item for Review | Priority |
|-----------------|----------|
|                 |          |
|                 |          |
|                 |          |
|                 |          |
|                 |          |
|                 |          |

## Part II: Assessment of Incident Response

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the response statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

| Assessment Factor   | Strongly Disagree |   |   | Strongly Agree |   |
|---|-------------------|---|---|----------------|---|
| The incident management was well structured and organized.  | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| The incident response was well coordinated and efficient.   | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| The forms and documentation used in the incident were clear and user friendly.  | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| The OES Staff were knowledgeable about the incident, kept the staff informed, on target, and was sensitive to group dynamics. | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| The Emergency Operations Plan and Checklists were a valuable tool throughout the incident.                                    | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| Participation in the incident was appropriate for someone in my position.   | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |
| The responders included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines.  | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4              | 5 |

## Part III: Participant Feedback

What changes would you make as a result of this incident? Please provide any recommendations on how this incident or future incidents could be improved or enhanced.

Is there any equipment or training needs that your position, section, department or organization needs?

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Please add any additional pages that you feel you may need.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
**Office of the Sheriff**

GREG MUNKS  
SHERIFF

CARLOS G. BOLANOS  
UNDERSHERIFF

TRISHA L. SANCHEZ  
ASSISTANT SHERIFF

400 COUNTY CENTER    ◻    REDWOOD CITY    ◻    CALIFORNIA 94063-1662    ◻    TELEPHONE (650) 599-1664    ◻    www.smcsheriff.com

June 11, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice and Records  
400 County Center; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury: San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services: Post-San Bruno Fire Self-Evaluation

Dear Judge Buchwald,

The Sheriff's Office appreciates the 2011-2012 Grand Jury's careful study of the issues concerning the Post-San Bruno Fire Self-Evaluation. Our responses to both the findings and recommendations pertaining to our agency are as follows;

**Findings**

1. The AA/CA Report was due on December 7, 2010. OES requested and received a thirty-day extension from the Coastal Region Office of CAL EMA; a final AA/AC report was filed on January 7, 2011.

**Agree** - OES did request and receive a thirty-day extension from the Coastal Region Office of CAL EMA and the final AA/AC report for the San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services was filed on January 7, 2011. Requests for one, and in some cases more than one extension, are not unusual in large scale incidents and are allowable by CAL EMA. The San Bruno incident was the largest interagency and longest running mutual aid incident in this County's history. Law mutual aid requests alone spanned an unprecedented 13 days. Over 500 police and firefighters responded to the scene and over 400 homes were evacuated. The extension was needed to compile the necessary information to file the report.

2. OES did not follow steps in the SMC "Operational Area" Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists such as: conducting data gathering workshops

to include key representatives of involved emergency response agencies and the preparation/distribution of a draft AA/CA Report to the primary responders for review and approval.

**Disagree in part** - OES completed AA/CA reports for both the San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services and the City of San Bruno. The San Bruno AA report was completed by OES at the request of the city. Data related to San Mateo County Departments such as resources and personnel deployed, radio system capacity, and volunteer and paid employee hours were all examined. OES remained within the focus and scope directed by both entities and therefore data gathering workshops that would have included key representatives from the involved emergency response agencies were not feasible. These reports were reviewed by attorneys at both the city and county level. Concern regarding litigation was evident throughout this process.

3. OES conducted a debriefing session on November 23, 2010 in preparation of the AA/CA Report.

**Agree** - This is standard practice in completing an AA/CA Report. The intent was to identify issues from county departments and bring them to a larger countywide debriefing. There was concern among agencies and cities regarding AAR due to potential litigation. As far as we know, we were the only agency to hold an After Action Conference.

4. Representatives of San Bruno (police, fire, city management, emergency services) were neither invited nor included in the debriefing session held by OES on November 23, 2010.

**Disagree in part** - The debriefing session held on November 23, 2010, was held to review, focus and critique the actions taken solely by the County of San Mateo departments involved in the incident. Primary responsibility for this incident remained with the City of San Bruno, not OES or the County of San Mateo. The AA/CA report prepared by OES for the San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services did not detail areas that crossed over into actions taken by allied agencies out of consideration for litigation that would likely arise out of the incident. OES completed the AA/CA report for the San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services. Additionally, OES completed the AA/CA for the City of San Bruno at their request. These reports were reviewed by attorneys at both the city and county level. OES remained within the focus and scope directed by both entities. OES did not participate in, nor were we invited to any debriefings held by other allied agencies.

5. The AA/CA Report filed by OES was not distributed to representatives of San Bruno police, fire, city management or emergency services.

**Disagree in part** - The AA/CA report filed by OES for the San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services detailed actions taken by County Departments and was therefore distributed to County Staff. This document was also

released to the press. The AA/CA report completed by OES for the City of San Bruno was turned over to them for distribution. Our original effort was considered too thorough by the City of San Bruno. The revised version was reviewed by the city prior to its submission.

6. The San Mateo County “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists, which is currently in revision by OES, does not require a follow-up process to track progress and completion of improvement items.<sup>1</sup>

**Disagree in part** - The revised San Mateo County Operational Area Emergency Operation Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 24, 2012. The revised plan specifies that the after action report will be utilized to develop and describe a work plan for implementing improvements. The after action report did identify areas for improvement, but a corresponding work plan was not developed. OES recognizes this as an area for improvement and has addressed each of the items that were previously not completed. See status update for additional details.

7. The task of compiling the information gathered from email questionnaires and the November 2010 debriefing meeting for the AA/CA Report was assigned to OES personnel within the Sheriff’s Office.

**Agree** - The task of compiling information was assigned to OES personnel within the Sheriff’s Office since OES completed the AA/CA reports for both the City of San Bruno (at their request) and the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Area Office of Emergency Services.

8. The OES Coordinator provided his superior with the final report for filing with the State and distribution to the County Manager’s Office, the County Communications Director, Supervisor Adrienne Tissier, Public Safety Communications and members of the press who requested it.

**Agree** - The OES report prepared for the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Area Office of Emergency Services reviewed the actions taken by County Departments, therefore it was distributed to County Management and County Elected Officials.

9. The final AA/CA Report was not adequately distributed; several of the individuals listed as a point of contact in the Report were unaware that their names were assigned to specific issues or problem statements, nor were they aware of the issues or problems identified within the report.

**Disagree in part** - The after action report prepared for the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Area Office of Emergency Services was distributed to County Management. The after action report did identify areas for improvement, but a corresponding work plan was not developed. This lack of a work plan to track follow through on specific

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<sup>1</sup> SMC “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists, Joseph R. Horton, Jr., Section 3, Tab 2, March 2007

issues is an area we have noted for improvement. The items that were previously not completed have each been addressed. See status update for additional details.

10. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates on the AA/CA Report, the OES completed three of the 13 corrective items (items 9, 10, 12) on time.<sup>2</sup>

**Agree**

11. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates identified in the AA/CA Report, the OES did not complete nine of the 13 corrective items (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11) on time.<sup>3</sup> Seven of those nine were still incomplete as of January 2012.

**Agree** – See below for a status update on the items listed as incomplete.

**Item 1** – Area for Improvement: Continue to provide ICS-300 and ICS-400 training; schedule EOC staff for ICS Training.

**Action:** Each month OES Staff prepares and distributes a training and exercise schedule that includes training opportunities offered through both San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. The last ICS 300 class offered by San Mateo County was held on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. ICS 400 training was last offered in San Francisco on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Item 2** - Strength: Continue multi-year training; continue to provide training to EOC Staff

**Action:** A 2010-2012 training and exercise plan has been in place. Training is offered regularly. Beginning in June, the Office of Emergency Services, in cooperation with the 20 Cities and Towns within the County, will undertake developing a three year training and exercise plan.

**Item 3** - Area for Improvement: Integrate Red Cross into EOC Structure; discuss info sharing with Red Cross.

**Action:** The Director of OES has met with the Bay Area Red Cross Chapter. The Red Cross is an active participant in EOC exercises. Discussions have taken place on ways to address the confidentiality policy that Red Cross has in place. The Office of County Counsel has also been consulted in an effort to overcome this obstacle. Work is ongoing in this area.

**Item 4** – Area for Improvement: Develop large white board “Status Boards” for use in the EOC.

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<sup>2</sup> Attachment 1- After Action/Corrective Action Report - Potential Corrective Actions, January 7, 2011

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

**Action:** OES has purchased white boards with grant funds. A large 4ft x 8ft whiteboard has been mounted in the OES Office at 555 County Center for use when the facility is activated as an EOC. Six 3ft x 4ft whiteboards were also purchased. Four of these boards are stored in the EOC at 400 County Center and two are stored at 555 County Center. A public information trailer was purchased with grant funding after the San Bruno incident. The interior and exterior of this vehicle is constructed of whiteboard material. Two mobile white boards are present in the OES Office at 555 County Center for use in the EOC at 400 County Center or elsewhere as needed. Standardized Incident Command System guide forms have been adopted for use by this office. An order has been placed to turn these forms into stencils for application to the white boards.

**Item 5 - Area for Improvement:** Question use of current jury room as EOC; research alternate location for EOC; research cell phone connectivity options.

**Action:** The County Manager and I are seeking alternate sites for the Emergency Operations Center. One site being studied is the newly acquired County Building at One Circle Star Way.

Hardware to enhance cell phone reception has been researched – cost of purchase and installation has been estimated at \$40,000. Funds are currently not available to complete this project.

**Item 8 - Area for Improvement;** Cell Phone coverage at the scene became overloaded, providing spotty coverage. Research cell phone coverage at disaster site; research solutions to cell phone connectivity issues in major event.

**Action:** The resource to address this problem was identified and in place in the field during the incident. The volume of calls still, however, overwhelmed the system. OES Staff has met with representatives from AT&T to identify two new resources that have been developed to help address this type of issue. One of these resources is cost prohibitive with a purchase price of \$750,000 to \$1,250,000. The other resource carries a purchase price of \$15,000 to \$21,000, along with a \$9,600 annual service charge, plus a \$2,000 per day charge when activated. In future incidents, OES will assess the need and request/purchase the resource if warranted.

**Item 11 – Area for Improvement:** Request for portable radios by the Health Department was denied by the radio shop. Clarify radio cache distribution; clarify radio distribution policy and modify if necessary.

**Action:** The radio shop has drafted a modification to their radio distribution policy to allow these radios to be distributed in non life threatening emergencies with the understanding they be immediately returned if needed.



12. According to the objectives and self-estimated completion dates identified in the AA/CA Report, the OES found corrective item 13 to be non-applicable because the Response Information Management System (RIMS) training is being replaced.

**Agree** - The RIMS system will be replaced at the state level by Web EOC. Embarking on a comprehensive training program for a system that will be replaced is not an effective use of resources. Web EOC is actively being developed at the County level through OES and there is a working group in place that contains a representative from each city. Once in place, OES will work with allied agencies to train users Countywide in the use of Web EOC.

13. The Primary EOC for the County is the Jury Assembly Room in the basement of the Hall of Justice in Redwood City, with the Alternate EOC located in the OES office on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the County Office Building at 555 County Center.

**Agree**

14. The Jury Assembly Room has no dedicated EOC functionality or equipment; it has no OES electronics, it has few phone lines and limited cell phone coverage.

**Agree** - The Jury Assembly Room certainly has its limitations when serving as the EOC. Please see response to recommendation #1 for the steps being taken to seek an alternate site for the EOC.

15. The Jury Assembly Room is designated as the Primary EOC because it is the largest unclaimed (by other agencies) space in the Hall of Justice and can be emptied of civilians awaiting jury duty during regular business hours.

**Agree** - OES recognizes that space is at a premium in County Offices and makes use of available resources. The EOC located in the OES Office is suitable for level 1 and level 2 emergencies. In fact, even in large scale events such as the San Bruno incident, and the 2011 Tsunami, the EOC in the OES Office was adequate. The use of the EOC in the OES office is preferable to the Jury Assembly Room; utilizing the Jury Assembly Room (while court is in session) as the EOC disrupts the criminal justice system. Additionally, Web EOC is being developed which will help decentralize some EOC activities, thereby reducing the number of people that physically need to occupy an EOC.

16. A Joint Information Center (JIC) was not in place at the disaster site.

**Disagree in part** - While this was a primary area of improvement identified in the after action report, it was not an area that was completely void of attention during the incident. OES arranged for press information officers from a variety of disciplines, including the County and the Sheriff's Office, to come together at the site to help facilitate the distribution of uniform information. It is preferable to establish a JIC off site rather than at the scene of a disaster. OES requested PIO

support from the Sheriff's Office with this effort and received it. The City and CalEMA assumed primary points of contact for the press which was appropriate.

17. The County Health Department requested portable radios to use after the immediate disaster phase of the San Bruno incident; the Information Services Department's Radio Shop denied its request based on the requirements stated in the Trunked Radio Cache Guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

**Agree** - The County Health Department has a supply of radios issued to them. The denial of the request was done to manage the supply of radios identified for use in life threatening emergencies.

18. The AA/CA Report recommended white status boards be purchased to use in the EOC. These boards have not been acquired due to "budget constraints." The cost of four status boards is approximately \$3,200.

**Agree** - OES identified grant funds and purchased white boards.

19. Cell phone coverage at the fire scene was overloaded and spotty. OES acknowledges widespread use of mobile phones for official business. The contact person identified in the AA/CA Report for Item 8 was unaware that it was his responsibility to address this issue.

**Disagree in part** - The resource to address this problem was identified and in place in the field during the incident. The volume of calls still however overwhelmed the system. OES Staff have met with representatives from AT&T to discuss two new resources that have recently been developed to help address this issue. See item 11 under status update for additional details.

20. At the Red Cross shelter established at the Glenview site, each registered person was asked to sign a confidentiality statement. Restrictions in the Red Cross confidentiality statement prevented the release of identities of persons under Red Cross care, which in turn impeded public safety officers attempting to determine if all the residents had evacuated the disaster area.

**Agree** - The director of OES has met with the Bay Area Red Cross Chapter. Discussions have taken place on ways to address the confidentiality policy that Red Cross has in place. The Office of County Counsel has also been consulted. Work is ongoing in this area.

## **Recommendations**

The Grand Jury recommends to the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff:

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<sup>4</sup> Trunked Cache Radio Guidelines, August 2007.

1. Take all steps necessary to establish a fully-equipped and functional primary EOC within 180 days.

**Action:** This recommendation requires further analysis. While I agree with the need for a new EOC, the 180 day timeline to establish a new fully-equipped EOC is not feasible. The County Manager and I are seeking alternate sites for the Emergency Operations Center. One site being studied is the newly acquired County Building at One Circle Star Way.

The OES Director has met with the Deputy County Manager to discuss the plans for the site. If this site does meet with our needs we will continue to explore other options.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Emergency Services Council and the Sheriff require its Office of Emergency Services:

1. Within 45 days, revise the internal OES AA/CA Report guidelines to:
  - a. Include a requirement to invite outside agencies (particularly from the cities, special districts and the Red Cross to participate in the data gathering/debriefing conference.
  - b. Establish a formal follow up, time driven procedure to be conducted monthly to measure the progress and completion of the corrective action/improvement plans; and
  - c. Design a report distribution process for the dissemination of the AA/CA Report, at a minimum to all attendees of the Data Gathering Conference with specific attention to the individuals listed as "Contact Person." The existence of the Report should be made known affirmatively to the press and general public to gain support for the challenges faced by OES.

**Action:** OES will not implement this recommendation. OES follows the guidelines as outlined in the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). SEMS guidelines and the after action report itself addresses the listed points raised by the Grand Jury.

2. Immediately direct that the OES escalate its professional attention to the importance and merit of the AA/CA exercise, and fully seek its value, instead of viewing the process, as one interviewee put it, "as a box-checking exercise."

**Action:** Recommendation has been implemented. OES values the After Action/Corrective Action process. This topic has been affirmatively addressed by the OES Director with staff.

3. Within 60 days, meet with the Red Cross to develop and finalize a mutually satisfactory method for public safety officers to immediately obtain client identity information of those in Red Cross care at and emergency site.

**Action:** Recommendation will not be implemented. The director of OES has met with the Bay Area Red Cross Chapter. Discussions have taken place on ways to address the confidentiality policy that Red Cross has in place. The Office of County Counsel has also been consulted. Work is ongoing in this area, however OES will not be able to obtain the identity information as directed by the Grand Jury. The Red Cross confidentiality policy is a National policy and not a policy that is unique to our area.

4. Within 90 days, design and offer refresher training for Incident Command System (ICS) 300 and 400, clarify the cost issue with cities, and revise the course evaluation form to include a question asking participants what training OES can do that will keep public safety officers up-to-date and enable participants to respond more effectively during an emergency.

**Action:** Recommendation has been implemented. Each month OES Staff prepares and distributes a training and exercise schedule that includes training opportunities offered through both San Mateo and San Francisco Counties. The latest ICS 300 class was offered by San Mateo County on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012. ICS 400 training was last offered in San Francisco on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

5. Within 120 days, in conjunction with other responsible agencies, formalize the Joint Information Center procedure. Define the expectations, structures, roles and function of the County Information Officer, the City Information Officers and the public agency Public Information Officers.

**Action:** OES will not implement this recommendation. The outline of the Joint Information Center (JIC) structure is already in place in the San Mateo County Emergency Operations plan. It is not appropriate for OES to define the roles and functions of an outside agency's Public Information Officer. In the case of the San Bruno incident, primary responsibility remained with the City of San Bruno and therefore OES was present to assist, not assume responsibility for the dissemination of information.

The OES Director has met with the County PIO and they will work together to seek additional training opportunities.

6. Within 30 days, purchase the status white boards for use during a county-wide emergency.

**Action:** Recommendation has been implemented – boards were purchased with grant funds

7. Within 90 days, design, upgrade, and share process and procedure with OES customer/supplier organizations and agencies such as the Radio Shop to update and communicate the Trunked Radio Cache Process. OES should also communicate with other County agencies like Health and Human Services to discuss their prospective roles in major emergencies.

**Action:** Recommendation will be implemented in the time frame as outlined. The radio shop has drafted a modification to their radio distribution policy to allow these radios to be distributed in non-life threatening emergencies with the understanding they be immediately returned if needed. The radio shop will be providing OES with a copy of the updated policy for inclusion in the County Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan. The OES Director is meeting with other county departments as recommended. The OES Director met with Public Health as recently as May 15, 2012.

8. Within 30 days review and adhere to the recommended processes described in the San Mateo County “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists.

**Action:** Recommendation has been implemented – the San Mateo County “Operational Area” Emergency Operations Plan, EOC Guidebook and Checklists have been reviewed by the OES Director.

9. On an on-going basis, identify and pursue grant funding for essential and non-essential items involved in the anticipated relocation of the EOC office.

**Action:** Recommendation has been implemented – pursuing grant funding is an ongoing priority.

In conclusion, the Sheriff’s Office appreciates the work of the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury and we look forward to working with our criminal justice partners in providing professional law enforcement services to those we serve in San Mateo County.

Sincerely,

Greg Munks  
Sheriff