



State of California Planning Best Practices for County Emergency Plans

DRAFT
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Introduction

Background

On September 29, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB-2968 – County Emergency Plans: Best Practices (Rodriguez) into California law. This amendment to section 8593.9 of the California Government Code requires Cal OES to develop best practices for counties developing and updating a county emergency plan, by January 1, 2022. This document aims to meet the requirements of that law.

The Emergency Plan Definition

An emergency plan is a document that defines the scope of preparedness and emergency management activities necessary for that jurisdiction to effectively respond to a large-scale incident or disaster. The government at each jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring that necessary and appropriate actions are taken to protect people, property, and the environment from the consequences of emergencies and disasters. An emergency plan formalizes how resources are to be used in diverse scenarios and which courses of action should be taken so that the community has a plan for several types of response operations.

Legal Requirements for an Emergency Plan

Government Code 8610 of the Emergency Services Act (ESA) permits cities and counties to form Local Disaster Councils (LDCs). If established, these councils are required to approve the development of emergency plans and send a copy of these plans to the State Office of Emergency Services.

Under AB 2968, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) is required to review ten (10) county emergency plans each year and confirm:

1. Whether the plan is consistent with Cal OES' proposed best practices.
2. Whether the plan protects and accommodates vulnerable populations during natural disasters.
3. Whether the plan has established procedures for alerting, evacuating, and sheltering individuals during an emergency.
4. Any other necessary and appropriate element, as determined by Cal OES.

An emergency plan is the base plan for the response operations that occur in a county. Emergency plans describing response operations may also be called:

- Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
- Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- Facility Emergency Response Plan
- General Plan – Safety Element
- County Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

Assembly Bill 2311 (Brown, Chapter 520, Statutes of 2016), which added California Government Code section 8593.3, requires each county and city to integrate access and functional needs upon the next update to its emergency response plan. Assembly Bill 477 (Cervantes, Chapter 218), further amends California Government Code section 8593.3, which requires each county and city to include representatives from access and functional needs populations in the next regular update to its emergency plan. Specifically, jurisdictions must include internal and external stakeholders throughout each phase of the emergency planning process in:

- Emergency communications
- Emergency evacuations
- Emergency sheltering.

Links to additional information on this legislation can be found in [Attachment B – Authorities and References](#).

The Definition of “Best Practice”

Best practices for county emergency plans are methods or techniques which have generally been accepted by diverse groups of professionals and practitioners well-versed in emergency management as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are prescribed as being correct or most effective or has become a standard way of doing things. Following the Camp Fire in 2018, experts agreed that there is a need to socialize best practices from those agencies that respond to major incidents with other public safety and emergency management agencies so that other jurisdictions may benefit from their expertise and best practices can become better known. ¹

Methodology for Identifying Best Practices

Cal OES performed a comprehensive review of over 50 After Action Reports (AARs) from emergency incidents and disasters between 1964 and 2021. From this research, best practices were culled from fifty-one incident AARs and have been categorized as examples of best practices for county emergency plans.

Additionally, whole community best practices were obtained during collaborative discussions, facilitated through the Listos California program, which occurred between members of the community, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and emergency managers from sample cities and counties in 2020. These twenty-three listening sessions provided innovative ideas and solutions for topics which have presented challenges to emergency managers in several recent disasters.

Finally, a Specialist Committee was formed through the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Maintenance System to represent the diverse group of professionals, practitioners, and representatives of specific communities who reviewed all suggested best practices and endorsed the most appropriate for county emergency plans in California.

In compliance with California Government Code (GC) 8588.15, Cal OES collaborated with thirteen state agencies/departments and multiple access and functional needs stakeholder groups to seek participation and representation from whole community partners to select individuals with Access and Functional Needs as representatives to SEMS Specialist Committees, work groups, and sub committees. After the nominations were collected, a collaborative review team was developed to screen each of the nominations submitted and assigned at least three individuals representing a broad variety of disabilities, and access or functional needs (including physical, sensory, intellectual, and developmental disabilities) to each of the SEMS Committees.

The Whole Community Planning Group (WCPG) SEMS Specialist Committee includes representation from the disability community, as well as representatives from Cal OES and each Mutual Aid Regional Advisory Committee (MARAC). Additional information about the WCPG SEMS Specialist Committee can be found in the committee's charter.

The following table shows a breakdown of best practices in [Attachment E – Best Practices Planning Checklists](#) by core capability:

Core Capability	# of Elements Best Practice	# of Sub-elements	# Total Best Practices
Planning	8	23	31
Public Information and Warning	5	19	24
Operational Coordination	6	22	28
Critical Transportation	2	6	8
Fatality Management	1	1	2
Infrastructure Systems	2	2	4
Logistics and Supply Chain Management	6	24	30
Mass Care Services	4	10	14
Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Services	2	1	3
Operational Communications	4	6	10
Situational Assessment	4	8	12
Total	44	122	166

[Attachment D – Explanation of Core Capabilities](#) shows the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) response mission area Core Capabilities under which each best practice is categorized. In accordance with the National Preparedness Goal, county emergency managers and planners should build resilience into each core capability to respond quickly to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs in the aftermath of a catastrophic incident. This list of best practices is a good foundation for building resilience.

Maintenance of This Document

This planning best practices document is considered a living document and the SEMS Whole Community Specialist Committee should continue updating and amending it after each significant incident, AAR, the discovery of best practices, or reviewed annually for feedback.

Additional Best Practices

Planning best practices on topics such as Extreme Temperature (hot/cold) planning, power disruption planning, and building public preparedness can be found on Cal OES' Plans and Publications page [CalOES Planning and Preparedness Plans Publications](#) and the Listos California webpage www.listoscalifornia.org

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Best Practice Examples for Planning

1.1 – The County has a current, approved base emergency plan

It is a California best practice for each county to have a current emergency plan for the county's response to emergencies and disasters. This plan should be capable of execution during both emergency and non-emergency situations, such as pre-planned special events, with inter-agency coordination.

In the aftermath of the 1964 Alaskan Earthquake, experts agreed that there must be an emergency plan to be prepared for a disaster. "This must be a flexible plan—one designed to meet various contingencies, either in peacetime or in war."² The scope of recent disasters has exceeded single jurisdictional boundaries, as such, participation of a county in regional and catastrophic planning is desirable and encouraged.³

The following figure depicts the standardized steps suggested for counties during the planning process. At each step, counties should consider the impact of their decisions on training, exercises, equipment, and other requirements. Although planning involves a consistent set of activities, the process is not strictly linear and includes iterative cycles of review and collaboration. Outputs from each step lead to greater understanding by the planning team and leadership of key issues and shape the contents of the plan.



Additional information on the steps in the planning process can be found in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) [CPG 101](#).

1.2 – The County Emergency Plan was created in collaboration with the Whole Community

It is a California best practice for the county emergency planning process to include a Whole Community Planning Team (WCPT). A WCPT is a comprehensive group of individuals who each represent different aspects of the whole community. This culturally diverse group brings experiences, community-based values, and customs that might not otherwise be known to emergency planners, resulting in a plan that is culturally competent and inclusive of all populations in the community.

1.2.1 – Detail the integration of communities' cultural competence

Cultural competence includes, but is not limited to, being respectful and responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse population groups, which are often most impacted by – and traditionally least involved in – preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Per California Government Code section 8593.3, cultural competence means the ability to understand, value, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures to ensure that the needs of all community members are addressed, with priority given to culturally diverse communities.

A culturally diverse community includes, but is not limited to diversity in:

- race and ethnicity, including indigenous peoples, communities of color, and immigrant and refugee communities
- citizenship status
- gender, including diverse gender identities
- age, including older adults and children
- sexual and gender minorities
- people with access and functional needs
- income level (including individuals who are economically depressed or unhoused)
- education level
- people with no or limited English proficiency
- geographic location

1.2.2 – Detail the integration of communities with Access and Functional Needs

Individuals with access and functional needs (AFN) are at greater risk for negative outcomes before, during, and after disasters and it is imperative to include representative populations in the planning process. AFN is defined in Government Code section 8593.3 as individuals who have:

- Developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities
- Chronic conditions or injuries
- Limited English proficiency or who are non-English speaking

Or individuals who are:

- Older adults, children, or pregnant
- Living in institutional settings
- Low-income, unhoused, and/or transportation disadvantaged

This legal definition is not all-inclusive. Comprehensive guidance on planning considerations for individuals with AFN can be found in the Cal OES [Access Functional Needs Site Library](#).

1.2.3 – Detail the integration of communities with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities

Counties should work with local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) or community partners, such as Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Independent Living Centers, Areas Agency on Aging, paratransit providers, and local agencies to ensure the county's emergency plans meet the needs of the whole community, including individuals with AFN.⁴

1.2.4 – Detail the integration of communities of older adults

Disasters of all kinds affect older adults disproportionately, especially those with chronic diseases, disabilities, or conditions that require extra assistance to leave an unsafe area and recover from an event. "Seniors, Senior Citizens, Geriatric, Elderly," these terms refer to people whose stage in life is generally called old age. People are said to be senior citizens when they reach the age of sixty or sixty-five because those are the ages at which most people retire from the workforce.⁵ The Older Americans Act provides services to people beginning at age 55 years old.⁶ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines an "older adult" as someone who is at least 60 years old. Older adults may live in a variety of circumstances, from assisted or independent living in a group setting or independently in their own home.

It is a California best practice for counties to develop procedures for a variety of living arrangements for older adults and other residents with AFN, before an incident. This is particularly important regarding evacuation planning.⁷

When drinking water became contaminated in 2010, the City of Barstow set up a system with a call-in number with information on how to plan for water delivery. This form of communication can be effective for older adults, speakers with limited English proficiency (if the multi-language line is provided), or people who are deaf or hard of hearing if Teletypewriter (TTY), Video Relay Service (VRS), and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is enabled. Water was delivered by employees of the police department, fire personnel, and public works.⁸

1.2.5 – Detail the integration of transportation for disadvantaged communities

“Transportation disadvantaged” refers to anyone dependent on others for transportation, including those who rely on public transit or accessible vehicles.

To integrate their emergency transportation plans, to address the needs of individuals who are transportation disadvantaged or rely on specialized, accessible vehicles, it is a California best practice for counties to determine alternative methods to evacuate when public transport cannot perform evacuation functions due to the severity of the incident.¹ Local jurisdictions should leverage their existing disability and older adults service systems, such as In-Home Supportive Services, Meals-on-Wheels and Paratransit, and others to assist in the evacuation of individuals with access or functional needs. It is a best practice for counties to have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) within, and outside, the jurisdiction to provide readily accessible transportation services to evacuate individuals with AFN. Additional information on evacuation transportation for individuals with AFN can be found here: [CalOES Access Functional Needs/Evacuation Transportation](#)

In 2021, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), in partnership with Cal OES, developed the *Best Practices for Allowing Pets on Public Transit* document. Counties should review these best practices when planning for pets during an evacuation. The document can be found here: [Best Practices for Allowing Pets on Public Transit](#)

1.2.6 – Detail the integration of underserved populations

Emergency planners cannot assume to understand all aspects of a community. Emergency managers must understand that individuals with access or functional needs and underserved populations are disproportionately affected by disasters. Having representation from underserved communities, representatives of various organizations that serve older adults, people with disabilities, and others with access or functional needs in emergency planning is key to resilience throughout the whole community.

To address inequity directly, San Francisco County established an Equity Group as part of their COVID-19 Command Center. Sonoma County appointed an Equity Officer to their COVID-19 response. This position lead inclusion efforts out of the County Administrator’s Office and weighed in on all aspects of county government to ensure the Whole Community was involved.

1.2.7 – Detail the integration of unhoused communities

During a community meeting with Sonoma County residents, it was highlighted that individuals who are unhoused may have significant challenges in a disaster. These individuals may be moved to unfamiliar areas due to evacuations, which may result in the loss of safe locations which had been identified for basic survival.

Many people who are unhoused are also living with disabilities that present significant barriers to housing, health care, employment, and other services. Trauma may be much more severe for those without reliable shelter/housing. It is essential to provide trauma-informed care that is compassionate, non-judgmental, and focused on safety and healing.

Due to stigma, discrimination, mental health issues, and trauma, many people experiencing homelessness have had difficulty navigating systems of care. They may have been evicted, relapsed in drug treatment, or experienced other challenges which dissolved hope for a situation that can improve. Individuals who are unhoused may exhibit mistrust for government services.

Here is one resource that guides on how to integrate planning for people experiencing homelessness: [National Health Care for Homeless Council, Emergency Preparedness](#)

1.3 – Standard Best Practices are used as a tool to help develop County Emergency Plans

It is a California best practice for county emergency planners to reference leading national, federal, state, and industry standards when planning for disasters.

1.3.1 – Is the county's emergency plan consistent with FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101?

The Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101 shows how emergency operations plans connect to planning efforts in all five mission areas. Version 3.0 (September 2021) of this guide emphasizes the importance of including the private and nonprofit sectors in planning activities and incorporates lessons learned as well as a pertinent new doctrine, policy, and laws. CPG 101 (Version 3) can be found here: [FEMA CPG 101 Volume III](#)

1.3.2 – Does the county's emergency plan use any California best practices? Cal OES' "Best Practices for Stakeholder Inclusion (June 2020)"

The purpose of this paper is to ensure emergency managers recognize, understand, and integrate whole community partners as they develop emergency plans. It can be found here: [Access Functional Needs Library](#)

1.3.3 – Samples of industry standards and best practices that counties may consider when developing their plans

Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)

EMAP identifies industry standards for a voluntary accreditation process of local, state, federal, higher education, and tribal emergency management programs. The Emergency Management Standard can be found here: www.emap.org

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1600) Standard

This standard is dedicated to helping users prepare for any type of crisis or disaster resulting from natural, human, or technological events. Widely used by public, non-profit, non-governmental, and private entities on a local, regional, national, international, and global basis, NFPA 1600 continues to evolve as a vital standard for the development, implementation, assessment, and maintenance of disaster/emergency management and continuity of operations programs. NFPA 1600 can be found here: www.catalog.nfpa.org

1.3.4 – Demonstrate that the county’s emergency plan is consistent with Cal OES Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Crosswalk

The EOP Crosswalk is the tool used by Cal OES to review emergency plans and determine whether they are sufficiently using the standards and best practices. The EOP Crosswalk can be found here: [CalOES Planning and Preparedness Plans Publications](#)

1.4 – The County conducted a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis and included results in the emergency plan

1.4.1 – Identify Hazards/Threats which could potentially impact the county

The National Risk Index, hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is an online tool to help illustrate the nation’s communities most at risk of natural hazards. It leverages the best available source data to provide a holistic view of community-level risk nationwide by combining multiple hazards with socioeconomic and factors of the developed environment.

The index calculates a baseline relative risk measurement for each United States county and census tract for 18 natural hazards, based on Expected Annual Loss, Social Vulnerability, and Community Resilience. Additional information about the Index can be found here: www.FEMA.gov

[Attachment C – List of Hazards/Threats](#) provides a minimum accounting of the hazards and threats for which each county should consider planning. Although this is a base consideration list, it is recognized that not all of these apply to all jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions include these hazard and threat plans as an annex to their base response operations plan, and some generate separate

standalone action or contingency plans for high-frequency risks. Additionally, some jurisdictions reference their FEMA-approved Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Risk Assessment and/or their locally approved Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments rather than recreate this analysis.

1.4.2 – Detail the county’s highest estimated risks and impacts

During the 2014 drought, Glenn County identified the need to have an action plan included as part of their county EOP.² It is a California best practice to define high-risk hazard areas in emergency plans.⁷

There are multiple instances where local planners are asked to conduct some form of HVA, including the creation of an EOP, Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan, Continuity of Government (COG) plan, General Plan Safety Element, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). A jurisdiction’s HVAs must be standardized across various plan types to ensure consistency in effort.

The purpose of completing an Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) before creating or updating an emergency plan is to identify all the most relevant hazards/threats which a particular community could and will experience, as well as their corresponding likely expected impacts. This analysis creates a solid foundation upon which response operations planning can be built.

A best practice HVA utilizes current and historical data to identify the estimated level of risk for each type of hazards/threats, broken down into categories such as:

- Probability – Frequency of occurrence
- Impact – Physical, economic, social, environmental, infrastructure, political, cyber, etc.
- Spatial Extent – Geographic expanse of the specific threat/hazard
- Warning Time – Amount of notice *before* impact
- Duration – Length of time for response operations as well as recovery operations

The following is a sample HVA summary:

HAZARD NATURAL(N) OR MAN- MADE(M)	RISK ASSESSMENT CATEGORY					RISK FACTOR (RF)
	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	SPATIAL EXTENT	WARNING TIME	DURATION	
Flood, Flash Flood, Ice Jam (N)	4	3	3	4	3	3.4
Winter Storm (N)	4	2	4	2	3	3.1
Utility Interruption (M)	4	2	2	4	2	2.8
Hurricane, Tropical Storm, Nor'easter (N)	2	3	3	1	4	2.6
Cyber-terrorism (M)	2	3	2	4	2	2.5
EH - Hazardous Materials Release (M)	4	2	1	3	2	2.5
Dam Failure (M)	1	3	2	4	4	2.4
Nuclear Incident (M)	1	3	2	4	4	2.4
Transportation Accident (M)	4	1	2	4	1	2.4
Wildfire (N)	4	1	2	3	2	2.4
Extreme Temperature (N)	4	1	2	1	3	2.3
Coastal Erosion (N)	4	1	1	1	4	2.2

Other forms of HVAs may include:

- Risk Assessment
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)
- Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)
 - Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201
 - CPG 201 can be found here: [CPG 201](#)
- Other gap analyses

1.5 – The County identifies how the emergency plan intersects with other emergency plans in the County

FEMA's CPG 101 states that "planners achieve unity of purpose by coordinating and integrating plans across all levels of government, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and individuals and families." This coordination supports the fundamental principle that, in many situations, emergency management and homeland security operations start locally and expand to include other government and private sector resources as the affected jurisdiction requires additional support.

Plans should communicate horizontally and vertically among levels of government to confirm a common operational focus. The emergency plan should synchronize with other operational plans, contingency plans, or threat/hazard-specific plans.

Emergency plans should foster horizontal communication throughout the county to help inform individual department and agency EOPs, as well as EOPs for the private sector and mutual aid partners. This helps stakeholders fit into the

jurisdiction's plans and helps each organization understand, accept, and prepare to execute its roles and responsibilities.

For example, the 2012 Baja Earthquake AAR identified that the Offices of Education and the school districts need to have disaster plans or procedures to respond to a disaster effectively and appropriately.⁴ This requires collaboration with the county Office of Emergency Services (OES) to ensure consistency with the county's emergency plans.

Counties can facilitate collaborative planning processes to support the alignment of plans within counties. These may include related roles & responsibilities, similar workflows, and common actions. By identifying correlations between plans, planners can de-conflict overly redundant or duplicitous actions. This can streamline response operations and prevent the inadvertent misallocation of critical personnel hours.

Additional information on the integration of plans can be found here: www.fema.gov

1.5.1 – Detail intersection with General Plan

California Government Code section 65300 requires every county to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of that jurisdiction. The general plan is the jurisdiction's blueprint of the future. It expresses community goals and embodies public policy that is the basis for all land-use decisions.

The goal of the safety element within the General Plan is to reduce the potential short and long-term risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change, and other hazards. Other locally relevant safety issues, such as airport land use, emergency response, hazardous materials spills, and crime reduction, may also be included. Some local jurisdictions have chosen to incorporate their emergency management plans into their safety elements.

Additional information regarding General Plans and Safety Elements can be found at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) here: www.opr.ca.gov

1.5.2 – Detail intersection with Hazard Mitigation Plan

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. Cal OES assists counties in the development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) and provides technical assistance, training, and outreach to local jurisdictions. Cal OES reviews all LHMPs in accordance with the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), Title 44 Code of Federal

Regulations (CFR) §201.6, and FEMA Guidelines and coordinates with local jurisdictions throughout the process. Once Cal OES planning staff find the LHMP to be “approvable,” the plan is forwarded to FEMA Region IX mitigation planning staff for review and approval.

One AAR suggests: As part of the LHMP process, counties should work with water agencies to pre-identify ownership of all flood control infrastructure (including culverts, flap valves, ditches, and levees) and share accumulated data amongst all flood response agencies.¹⁰

It is a California best practice for counties to pre-identify mitigation strategies that can better protect critical facilities and infrastructure from their hazard risk, and act upon them.¹⁰ Additional information on LHMP planning can be found here: [CalOES Local Hazard Mitigation Program](#)

1.5.3 – Detail intersection with Disaster Recovery Plan

An interdepartmental committee may be utilized to coordinate the development of the recovery plan. It should include resource lists for contacts with agencies that will be involved in recovery activities, such as Small Business Administration, Office of Education, Cal OES, etc.⁴ Consider appointing a Recovery Unit Leader early in the incident. Identify and staff additional dedicated positions to support recovery operations, ensuring there is adequate staffing in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for financial document processing and collection.¹¹

The county should also consider adding a Recovery Section to the EOC, as well as developing public/private sector training which utilizes Chambers of Commerce and Property Business Improvement District (PBID) within their county to educate members about Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and private entities, and how they fit into the response and recovery space during an emergency.⁴ Establish a recovery planning unit within the planning section of the EOC to think ahead and assess the impacts, anticipate requirements, and do early planning for recovery.¹²

Pre-disaster planning for recovery ensures that a county is ready to undertake an organized process toward restoration and does not miss opportunities to rebuild in a sustainable, resilient way. If counties have not already created a separate plan for recovery operations, they should consider developing a Recovery Annex to their emergency plan to assist with coordinating and/or tracking recovery activities as they occur.

Counties should consider establishing a Volunteer Coordinator position. Counties can create an organizational element parallel to the EOC as a part of a Recovery Support Function (RSF) to manage and use voluntary resources.¹³

Counties should provide advanced training to personnel identified to serve as a Recovery Unit Leader.¹¹ Establish a multi-disciplined recovery team representing affected county departments.¹⁴ Pre-assign staff and establish procedures for the critical task of tracking resources and costs. Proper documentation is necessary to establish eligibility for available recovery grant funding and cost recovery.⁷

The county's recovery plan or annex should establish protocols for recovery operations.⁴ It should include a pre-disaster cost recovery plan and a debris management plan. Collaboration with stakeholders across the county to pre-identify debris management sites is a preferred technique. Hold a joint workshop with Finance and Logistics personnel on emergency procurement, purchasing, resource ordering, and tracking, and personnel and equipment timekeeping.¹¹

Additional information on the response nexus to recovery is in FEMA's *Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments* (February 2017), which can be found here: [FEMA Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments](#)

1.5.4 – Detail intersection with Cybersecurity Plan

The California Cyber Security Integration Center (Cal-CSIC) is the State's information clearinghouse for cybersecurity information and has developed the California Joint Cyber Incident Response Guide to assist in planning for cybersecurity.

The guide aims to develop an understanding of how counties can react to an incident, depending on the organization's mission and the mission-critical systems required to meet the organization's business objectives in the threat environment. The guide is designed to assist governmental and non-governmental entities within California, including State, Local, Tribal, Territorial and Private Sector.

Each county should also regularly review its critical business systems and applications. The reviews are typically conducted annually to ensure applications and systems are still relevant for business operations.

Cal-CSIC Cybersecurity guidance can be found here: [California Cybersecurity Integration Center](#)

Additional information on the security of public safety communications can be found here: [CSIC Cybersecurity Guidance](#)

1.6 – County-identified roles & responsibilities of Advance Planning

An Advance Plan provides decision-makers with critical details needed to identify the potential mid-to-long range social, economic, environmental,

infrastructure, and political impacts of an incident. The Advance Plan highlights forecasted events or conditions likely to occur in future operations, particularly those situations which may influence the overall strategic objectives of the Emergency Operations Center.

SEMS lists an “Advance Planning Unit” under the Planning and Intelligence Section. This was successfully demonstrated during the 2011 Severe March storms where Advance Planning was highlighted as a successful operation.¹⁵

Following the 2003 Southern California Fires, experts agreed that there was a need to strengthen the advance planning process in the Planning and Intelligence function at all levels. They suggested that training stresses the importance and practical implications of items identified during the advance planning process. There's also a need to identify methods for following up on advance planning issues and conduct additional training on advance planning.¹⁶

A dedicated Advance Planning Unit within the Planning and Intelligence Section of the EOC should be outlined in the County EOP as an option during large-scale disasters to ensure long-term planning issues, including the transition to recovery, are properly addressed during future disasters. This Advance Planning Unit should develop objectives related to long-term planning as part of operational period EOC Action Plans (EAP)¹

Planning for the extreme weather event proved to be extremely valuable and provided incident management personnel and additional firefighting resources for the initial attack during the 2007 Orange County Santiago Fire.¹⁷

1.7 – Counties should have a Continuity of Operations plan

It is a California best practice for counties to have a current Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This may be as an annex to the emergency plan or as a standalone document.¹⁴ A COOP plan is created to ensure that counties and their partner agencies can continue the performance of essential functions under a broad range of circumstances, including sudden disruptions in technology, facilities, and staff.

1.7.1 – Detail COOP roles & responsibilities

It is a California best practice for counties to identify and designate specific staff with knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve as COOP leads or COOP Manager. Evaluate and refine tiered Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) to understand which functions can be put on hold to free up personnel to serve in the COOP group, EOC, or fill other positions.¹⁸

1.7.2 – Detail program for continuity of personnel

Experts suggest setting up COOP response teams and identifying the various lines of succession for each position. A COOP plan should attempt to develop a line of succession with at least three people deep for all positions which may be involved in disaster response or recovery activities. Those individuals who are included in the line of succession should have the authority to take charge in case of an emergency and have the authority to make decisions for their agency when assuming that role.⁴

COOP plans should first and foremost include procedures for the rapid evacuation and relocation of critical emergency services facilities such as emergency communications centers (e.g., 911 and dispatch) and the EOC.

1.7.3 - Detail program for continuity of facilities

During Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the Charleston, South Carolina EOC had to be evacuated during the height of the storm due to the roof being torn off by the wind. Evacuation also included an estimated 150 media personnel.¹⁹ Early reports indicated that this move meant a loss of all communication to the city's EOC. Counties should consider the following while planning for EOC evacuations:

- What is the impact on the response?
- How do we get operational again?
- How long will it take?
- What problems could we encounter and how can we deal with them?¹⁹

At one point during the 1986 floods, there was danger of inundation at the State Operations Center. Cal OES was prepared to move the staff, but not the communications and other equipment, nor the other resources essential for operations. Butte County demonstrated very effective and seamless continuity of operations when they had to relocate their EOC, jail, and law and fire dispatch centers as part of the overall evacuation process during the Oroville Spillway incident.²⁰

1.7.4 – Detail a program for testing, training, and exercising the COOP plan

It is essential to train, test, and exercise staff on the COOP plan regularly. During the 1989 floods, the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Program had to be evacuated due to asbestos contamination. They had just completed their first operational recovery plan, identifying critical items (by position) to remove from the facility in case of an emergency evacuation. The plan also identified who was responsible for removing each specific item. Since this plan was so new, they had not yet trained staff nor tested the plan.¹⁹

1.8 – County has a regular update cycle for the emergency plan

1.8.1 – Detail the maintenance cycle for the county’s emergency plan

CPG 101 (Version 3) states that some jurisdictions have found it useful to review and revise portions of their EOPs every month, while others accomplish their reviews annually. Teams should consider reviewing and updating the plan after the following events:

- A major incident
- A change in operational resources (e.g., policy, personnel, organizational structures, management processes, facilities, equipment)
- A formal update of planning guidance or standards
- A change in elected officials
- Each time the plan is used
- Major exercises
- Changes in the jurisdiction's demographics, hazard profile, or infrastructures
- Changes in the jurisdiction's tolerance of identified risks
- The enactment of new or amended laws or ordinances

It is a California best practice for the county’s emergency plan to be reviewed and updated regularly. Regardless of the update cycle implemented, it is incumbent upon emergency planners and emergency managers to consider the plan a “living document” that can and should be reviewed and updated routinely with a periodic comprehensive review.

1.8.2 – Detail the program for testing, training, and exercising the county’s emergency plan

Even the best emergency plan will face challenges if those executing it are not adequately trained. Dozens of AARs listed the need to enhance SEMS training at all levels of government. “There must be an emergency plan to be prepared for a disaster. There must [also] be trained people—who know what their responsibilities are, and where to go and what to do when disaster strikes.”²

Following the 2015 Aliso Canyon Gas Leak, after-action reports recommended that local jurisdictions exercise their emergency plan with relevant stakeholders (e.g., utility emergency response personnel). This is most successful when conducted *before* emergencies to enhance the ability to coordinate during an emergency response.²¹ Counties should also include a regular schedule for testing equipment in their preparedness plans and abide by that schedule.²²

It is important to integrate the whole community into disaster drills, as well as training and exercise scenarios, to identify and resolve gaps before an incident. This could include utilizing paratransit partners and other accessible vehicle providers during an evacuation scenario. This practice is best accomplished by

involving the WCPT during the exercise development and AAR processes to provide inclusive/integrated services to all community members in an exercise.

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Best Practice Examples for Public Information and Warning

2.1 – County has a current, approved Public Information Plan

Following the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, experts suggested that counties develop community engagement protocols and procedures for community outreach to facilitate more effective and immediate results.²³ These protocols should be culturally competent and accessible to the whole community.

2.1.1 – Detail the county's community communications and engagement strategy

It is a California best practice for counties to develop a robust public education campaign and communications strategy. This can be done as crisis communications, external communications, Joint Information System (JIS) annex, or as a standalone plan.¹⁴

The strategy should document the use of redundant information with a plan to ensure the widest reach in public information efforts.¹ The plan should identify how the whole community benefits and receives information regarding critical incident information such as evacuation and re-entry.

The 2017 Orange County Water Interruption AAR identified that a central location for information on the incident, such as a disaster information website or a single social media channel, was not identified.²⁴ It is a California best practice for county emergency plans to detail the communications paths with community-based organizations, community leaders, and business and industry stakeholders during large emergencies.

2.1.2 – Detail the county's Public Information Office roles & responsibilities

A Public Information Office (PIO) is designated by a public authority to create and enable clear, accessible, and concise communication between government agencies, news media outlets, and the general public. EOC staff should be focused on the integration of the PIO function into EOC operations and how to manage internal EOC communications about public messaging.¹⁸

The 1991 East Bay Hills Fire indicated the need for comprehensive public information and warning. Experts suggested that a trained PIO be immediately dispatched to any major incident and that public information be a high priority.¹³

PIOs need clarified roles, responsibilities, and conformity to SEMS.²⁵ PIOs need to communicate critical information so individuals and families may make important time-based decisions about their safety and well-being. Quality public

communications provide people with enough information that the behavioral actions needed by a population take place rapidly. PIO skill sets range from developing strong relationships with media outlets and partner agencies providing information dissemination to creating content for video, audio, and social media for consumption directly by the public.⁴

2.1.3 – Detail the county’s use of a Joint Information System, if applicable

Experts suggest including a team of PIOs in the emergency response plan for every county. Counties are strongly encouraged to identify PIO resources capable of fulfilling the following functions: Information Gathering; Information Dissemination; Media Monitoring; VIP Engagement; and Public Meetings and Forums. “Part of the initial dispatch of resources to any major incident should automatically be a trained PIO Team or Joint Information Center (JIC). The quicker a PIO Team (JIC) can get to a scene and set up operations, the better the information effort will be. A 25-30 person trained PIO Team ((JIC) should be in the plan for every city and county [depending on the size, complexity, and resource capabilities of the jurisdiction]. JIC members will typically work in the field, at the EOC, the Unified Command Post (UCP), phone banks, and in dispatch, answering media and public inquiries.”¹³

It is a California best practice for counties to consider using the (JIS) concept. Expanding the number of trained PIOs, cross-training other staff to support PIOs, and including PIOs from other county departments on the JIC team could help fill a variety of necessary public information roles. Identify additional staff that is not currently assigned as PIOs throughout the county organization who have skill sets that can assist and augment the PIO team staffing needs.²⁶

Multilingual PIOs or translators are needed to provide information to the large number of individuals who speak English as a second language.⁴ The executive level should be trained to act as a PIO during emergencies. Additional county staff should attend PIO training. It is also suggested that each county should train someone to be a bilingual PIO.

Jurisdictions also benefit greatly by having trained PIO staff.¹⁸ However, not all incidents directly impact all counties. Trained PIOs who are not impacted by a disaster could potentially be made available to assist with other incident types, depending on leadership approval.⁴

It is also a California best practice to establish a county-wide PIO working group to discuss issues and develop strategies in advance of an incident, and to improve coordination with cities, special districts, and tribal nations.¹⁸

2.1.4 – Detail the county’s Joint Information Center roles & responsibilities

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) describes a JIC as the central point of contact for PIOs and news media to coordinate incident information activities at the scene of the incident. Public information officials from all participating federal, state, and local agencies should co-locate at the JIC.

During the 2015 Aliso Canyon Gas Leak, a JIC was established that included both private and public agencies. The challenge was maintaining and conveying unified messaging amongst the stakeholders and the public. The JIC’s PIOs worked together to distribute a timely, coordinated, and uniform message to the public and media to meet the challenge.²¹

Another challenge that a JIC can address is developing procedures with law enforcement to manage dignitaries’ tours of disaster sites without disturbing lifesaving work. Counties should establish procedures to respond to requests for tours and visits by politicians, researchers, and foreign visitors following a disaster.²⁷

2.1.5 – Detail the county’s JIC location and pre-identified equipment needs

Experts agreed after the 1991 East Bay Hills Fire that counties should equip a JIC, complete with staff, phones, computers, and ham radio operators.¹³ This can be a physical (fixed or mobile) and/or a virtual (telework) site.

A 2017 incident in Orange County illustrated the challenges of selecting an impromptu space for the JIC. The chosen location did not have enough room and was not set up for operations, press briefings, or parking.²⁴

Counties should consider constructing or reserving a dedicated space for the JIC, co-located with the EOC, to fit the following parameters:

- Support up to 20 workstations (or other proportionate)
- Provide 2 computer monitors per workstation to view multiple social media channels and be able to craft messaging
- Install large monitors on walls that can display information (static and dynamic), social media feeds, etc.
- Provide whiteboards and breakout meeting spaces
- Provide space and technology for media briefings
- Provide studio space to produce in-house video content and streaming content¹⁸

Counties should consider the need for additional space during larger incidents when the JIC needs to be expanded to meet the increased workload, but the physical workspace is rendered insufficient. This should be exceptional, not routine. Expanding the amount of space dedicated to the PIO team should be coupled with reconfiguring the team distribution and using the additional space

for larger staffing requirements for media and social media monitoring and supporting the field PIOs when they are not in the field.¹⁸

Expansion space could be achieved through a portable office trailer delivered to the EOC or through the reuse of other county office spaces as a more distant satellite location. In either case, workflow, process, and guidelines will be needed whenever the baseline configuration must be changed.¹⁸

2.1.6 – Detail the county's use of the Joint Information System, if applicable

A Joint Information System/Joint Information Center plan should be developed and exercised to ensure a coordinated public information release process for future complex incidents.²⁴

Counties can refine the JIS concept and develop a JIS plan with a charter to address authorities, roles, responsibilities, a concept of operations describing how to work with partners, share information, and how to integrate JICs into other JICs. Examine various models and practice communication protocols to determine the best fit for the county.¹⁸

2.2 – County Public Information Plan was created in collaboration with the Whole Community

2.2.1 – Detail the county's collaboration with the Whole Community Planning Team

It is a California best practice for counties to identify inclusive representation for the Whole Community Planning Team (WCPT). This could include CBOs (such as Independent Living Centers, Regional Centers, or Meals on Wheels) and community leaders to amplify messaging.

Accessibility, plain language, multiple languages, pictures, and pictorial symbology are necessary for any public information campaign. The PIO plan should include a process for the development of communications messages which address the appropriate use of social media and other outlets for situational awareness and identify trusted sources of information. This includes pre-incident public education and messaging to community partners who serve individuals with access or functional needs (e.g., regional centers, independent living centers, deaf and hard of hearing centers, family resource centers, senior centers, etc.) emergency shelters, and other mass care sites.²⁶

2.2.2 – Detail county's workflow for providing accessible, two-way social media communications with the public

Social media has proven to be valuable during disaster response and recovery. Moreover, it is also being used for emergency preparedness planning. As emergency managers come to rely on social media platforms like Twitter,

Facebook, and Instagram, it is important to understand the accessibility constraints of each tool. Live video features through Social Media may not provide information in accessible formats (ASL and captioning) for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

To ensure social media-based emergency communications meet accessibility standards, consider the following:

- Can posts/messages be read by screen readers?
- Is all information contained in pictures also included in the body of the post?
- Is the social media website Section 508 compliant?
- Can videos posted through social media outlets be automatically or manually captioned?
- Can scripts be posted to make video content accessible?
- Is information being distributed and posted in multiple formats and platforms to reach the widest audience and ensure accessibility of information (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Nextdoor, etc.)
- Is the information being transmitted through the emergency notification system?

The importance of social media cannot be overstated, before, during, and after a disaster.⁷ Following the 2014 Fire Season, El Dorado County identified the need to integrate social media into the county's EOC to ensure accurate and timely communications on which the public can rely for critical information during incidents.²⁸

It is a California best practice to take advantage of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Periscope, among others.¹⁰ A JIC can support social media monitoring. Counties should include captions in all pre-recorded material including videos posted on the internet and social media to ensure that materials are usable for a wide variety of individuals with access or functional needs.

According to the AAR, social media messages from all supporting agencies were not coordinated during the 2017 Orange County Water Interruption incident, thereby undermining all of the messaging.²⁴ During the March storms of 2011, public information contributed most to the protection of the community during the severe weather event. Several counties used public information phone lines and social media such as Twitter and Facebook to disseminate necessary emergency updates to the community.¹⁵

2.3 – County has a current, approved Alert and Warning Plan

It is a California best practice for county emergency plans to include an annex for public alert & warning and/or refer to a more comprehensive Alert and Warning Plan. Comprehensive best practices for alert and warning can be found here: [California Alert and Warning Guidelines](#)

2.3.1. – Demonstrate that plan is consistent with California Standard Statewide Evacuation Terminology

On May 15, 2020, California adopted common terminology around wildfire evacuations. “Evacuation Warning” and “Evacuation Order” were selected to help clarify and reduce potential public delays in action due to a misunderstanding of terminology.

- Evacuation Order: Immediate threat to life. This is a lawful order to leave now. The area is lawfully closed to public access.
- Evacuation Warning: Potential threat to life and/or property. Those who require additional time to evacuate, and those with pets and livestock should leave now.
- Shelter in Place: Go indoors, shut and lock doors and windows. Prepare to self-sustain until further notice and/or contacted by emergency personnel for additional direction
- Evacuation Order(s) Lifted: The formal announcement of lifting evacuations in an area currently under evacuation.
- Hard Closure: Closed to all traffic except Fire and Law Enforcement.
- Soft Closure: Closed to all traffic except Fire, Law Enforcement, and Critical Incident resources (i.e., utilities, departments of transportation, etc. or those needed to repair or restore infrastructure)
- Resident only Closure: Soft closure with the additional allowance of residents and local government agencies assisting with response and recovery

Additional information on standardized language for evacuations can be found here: www.calalerts.org/evacuations

Adoption of this terminology has not been consistent across all counties and their agencies. Some residents lack a basic understanding of what response actions need to be taken under each definition.²⁹

2.3.2 – Detail the county’s public notification systems

Understanding the sensory perception considerations around emergency announcements is important. Sensory perception is the process of becoming aware of something through the senses like sound, hearing, vision, and touch. Communication should include methods such as sound (loudspeakers, sirens, bullhorns, knocking) and visual aids (flashlights, flashing lights, picture signs,

notes, signs, etc.) so that people who are blind or have low-vision or who are deaf or hard of hearing get needed information.

It is a California best practice for counties to establish detailed procedures for coordinating the delivery of alert and warning messages between multiple platforms. The plan should include how counties train alert operators and personnel in dispatch centers and EOCs to activate emergency alert systems. The plan should establish a regular documented refresher training program for alert authorizers and alert operators and specify the use of Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) and establish procedures.⁷

2.3.3 – Detail the county’s program for residents, visitors, and other stakeholders to sign up for emergency alerts

After the 2007 Santiago Fire, Orange County coordinated the development and implementation of a public notification system. Following the Freeway Complex Fire, the City of Yorba Linda began implementing an alert and notification program.³⁰

It is important to offer emergency preparedness guidance and literature, as well as critical information dispersed during disasters, in multiple languages. This information needs to be understood, consumable, and actionable by the whole community, including California's wide variety of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities.

Signing Up for Alerts

In Tehama County, the Corning Community Foundation uses paper forms in multiple languages to help residents sign up for emergency alerts. They then submit those paper forms to the Sheriff’s Office to be entered into the computer.

Community feedback is that alerting went very well for the Creek Fire, even during COVID-19 and even in rural areas. They attributed this success to the fact that alerts are geared toward affected areas (e.g., wildfire evacuations) whereas a secondary notification system is geared toward general information for the entire community (e.g., traffic alerts). Each application for emergency alerts is reviewed by the Office of Emergency Services for specific geo-location and case management of ineffective alerts which are reported.

Emergency managers in Madera County have signed individuals up for alerting with a laptop in real-time and have paper forms for non-tech savvy community members to sign up for alerts. By signing up as many people as possible, the county’s focus is on getting alerts and warnings to the public early, so that people who need to evacuate early do so.

2.4 – County Alert and Warning plan was created in collaboration with the Whole Community

Emergency notification systems must be accessible and capable of reaching a diverse population of individuals to effectively relay information regarding any prolonged outage, threat, or hazard, as appropriate. The delivery should remain coordinated, prompt, reliable, and contain actionable information for the whole community using clear, consistent, accessible, culturally, and linguistically appropriate methods.

2.4.1 – Detail the integration of communities with Access and Functional Needs into the Alert and Warning plan

Notification of public warning (Red Flag Warning, evacuations, shelter in place, etc.) should be done through multiple trusted sources such as the official Emergency Notification Systems, website, radio, social media, and community partners. The 2015 Refugio Oil Spill reiterated the need to ensure that communication with people with AFN is equally as effective as communication with people without AFN.²³

Comprehensive guidance on planning considerations for individuals with access or functional needs can be found in the Cal OES AFN Library: [Access Functional Needs Library](#)

Some examples include:

- Integrate/use American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at all emergency-related press conferences, town halls, and events
- Provide materials in multiple languages
- Ensure electronically posted info meets 508 compliance standards

2.4.2 – Detail the integration of communities' cultural competence into the Alert and Warning plan

Equitable access to information is user-centered, barrier-free, and format-independent. This is a critical gap for counties to address when socializing information with the public. For example, when targeting alerts to individuals who rely on In-Home Support Services (IHSS), San Bernardino community members indicated that critical disaster messages need to be shared equally with individuals and their IHSS caregivers

Preparedness Materials

Preparedness materials and programs need to be offered in multiple languages and methodologies to ensure the messages are communicated with the whole community.²⁴

Interpreters

The Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN), in conjunction with the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI), conduct Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI) training throughout California. This program trains and credentials qualified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to provide services at press briefings, shelters, town halls, etc. before, during, and after disasters. Participants undergo rigorous training, Department of Justice background check, and receive a Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI) credential upon completion. The DRI program ensures that trained, qualified, credentialed, and screened ASL interpreters are available to provide services before, during, and after an emergency and that emergency information is accessible to the whole community, including individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Alameda County community members stated there needs to be an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter in the frame whenever a person is speaking on camera, such as during press conferences. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing rely on close captioning and/or sign language interpreters in the camera shot when announcements are made. They also suggested that counties have a transcript ready in a format that is accessible to assistive technology (such as a screen reader) immediately following.

Language

Part of cultural competence is understanding the barriers which diverse communities often face, such as community members speaking/reading English as a Second Language (ESL) or as part of a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) community.

Any printed or broadcasted disaster-related information should be provided in multiple languages to accommodate those where English is not the primary language.²⁵ In response to the 2010 Barstow Contaminated Drinking Water incident, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health issued public health advisories in both English and Spanish for those with limited English-speaking ability. It is important to be continuously aware and regularly advised of the various languages spoken and read throughout the county.

Community members in San Francisco reiterated the importance of all preparedness/disaster messages being socialized using appropriate cultural syntax. Solano County community members recalled using pictorial messaging as a way of removing miscommunications through language barriers when socializing important issues.

Discussions with several communities identified a lack of information about signing up to receive emergency alerts in languages other than English. Solano County community members suggested easy access to Language Translation

Services, especially for individuals who speak Pacific Islander languages. San Diego County community members asked that those services also include Swahili, Creole, Farsi, and ASL. San Diego County also utilizes a Partner Relay Network to help translate alerts through mass emergency landline systems and is working on building a cell phone system to do the same.

Trusted Source

Community members in Solano County indicated that some cultures experience a great deal of shame when asking for help during a crisis. Some communities may rely on community leaders as trusted partners. JICs collaborating with trusted community leaders has proven to enhance community resilience.

According to Sonoma County community members, some communities (i.e., some indigenous language communities) often trust their community leaders most. PIOs can utilize individuals already trusted in the community as effective messengers, instead of relying upon outside subject matter experts. This strategy demonstrates meaningful follow-up to a community after an issue has been resolved.

2.4.3 – Detail the integration of communities with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities

Sensory Disabilities

It is a California best practice for counties to plan for the equal access of critical information to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or are blind or have low vision. This includes community members using American Sign Language (ASL), assistive technology, and communication resources.

Community members in both Shasta and Madera Counties suggested the use of audible devices, such as Hi-Lo sirens installed in law enforcement vehicles and loud outdoor horn alerts so that those hard of hearing can feel the vibrations and distinguish the difference in the sound between routine notifications and evacuation alerts.

Additionally, it was suggested that emergency apparatus can turn on their sirens and lights, shine spotlights through windows of homes, and ring doorbells to activate light alerts within the home of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It should be noted that advocates recommend training first responders or emergency personnel on tactile signing for use during an emergency evacuation.

Plain Language

It is a California best practice for county Alert and Warning plans to use “plain language” while messaging to the public. Public messages should:

- Be crafted for understanding at a 3rd- or 4th-grade level
- Be organized and available in multiple languages and formats
- Be written to include high contrast colors and font or text size adjustments are available for the various visual disabilities
- Detail how videos or podcasts that contain audio, or video files with audio components, are presented to the public with closed captioning transcripts
- ASL Interpreters should be incorporated within all public forums and press events
- Detail how ASL interpreters are displayed when the county is pushing out emergency alerts via video screen

2.4.4 – Detail the integration of communities with older adults

Solano County emergency management officials expressed that there may be challenges in getting older adults signed up for opt-in alerting software. San Diego County community members suggested an opt-out alerting system instead.

In San Bernardino County, community members suggested that the government pre-load free cellular phones with preparedness software, before issuing them to those in need. San Francisco County community members suggested providing technical support for individuals who are not tech-savvy as they are signing up for emergency alerts and accessing information.

Madera County community members identified that many older adults may prefer voice calls rather than text messages due to challenges with technology acuity. Alameda County community members indicated that older adults are often reluctant to answer unknown numbers and that text messaging may be effective unless the number is whitelisted with the telephone providers to aid in this challenge.

Opt-In Emergency Notification

Landline telephones are becoming less common in the United States. Emergency plans should also consider the use of opt-in emergency notification options. In the 2007 Southern California wildfires, the Reverse 911 telephone emergency notification systems and public notification systems for evacuation played a key role in alerting residents and providing timely life-safety information.³¹

2.4.5 – Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged communities

Although sheltering-in-place is often considered a cost-free endeavor, Tulare County community members identified unaffordable home prices as a cause of food shortages when multiple generations of family members shelter-in-place at the same home.

2.4.6 – Detail the integration of underserved populations

Underserved populations most likely have limited access to information through traditional media. San Francisco community members highlighted the need for broadband access in the *entire* community to have equal access to pre- and post-disaster preparedness materials. For example, many underserved populations in California currently do not have broadband access. Counties should consider pathways to communicate with underserved populations when broadcast media does not exist in an area.

Equal Access to Information

Lake County community members identified that some individuals with internet-based phone service and cordless phones will have no phone service when power fails unless they have battery backups. Tehama County community members suggested mapping out residents without internet access, to better identify who cannot receive emergency alerts through that method.

Another example of how to address this gap was highlighted following the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill when it was suggested that counties develop community open-house event protocols and procedures for in-person community outreach to facilitate earlier community engagement.²³

During the 1991 East Bay Hills Fire, authorities conducted in-person public information campaigns on evacuation issues after the incident.¹³ During community listening sessions Tulare County community members stated that reaching out to mobile home parks to share information about disasters and sheltering is a good way to connect with underserved community members. Flyers, town hall meetings, door-to-door visits, and large-print brochures can be used for communications.

Following the 2012 Baja Earthquake, experts recommended establishing a 2-1-1 information line that can be updated to provide the public with the latest disaster-related information, including evacuation/shelter sites.⁴

2.4.7 – Detail the integration of unhoused communities

Counties should adopt a strategy to partner with organizations or coalitions that serve individuals who are unhoused such as food banks, shelters, urgent clinics, and local agencies such as social services and welfare. A good list, but certainly not an all-inclusive list, may be found here: [The National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#)

It is recommended counties review and possibly use applicable portions of *Principles of Risk Communications - A Guide to Communicating with Socially Vulnerable Populations Across the Disaster Lifestyle*: [Risk Communication Guide](#)

2.5 – County pre-identified messages for the primary hazards/threats impacting the County

It is a California best practice for counties to develop pre-scripted and accessible messaging for most common hazards/threats (such as earthquake, flood, utility interruption, and wildfire).²⁷ Template creation, such as pre-scripted communications for specific incidents, should be drafted and approved before an incident to ensure readiness.³²

A Red Flag Warning exists for the cities of (_____). This means there is a high fire danger for your area. Be prepared to evacuate if you receive an Evacuation Warning (GET READY) or Evacuation Order (GO NOW). There is no active emergency in your area. Please share with your neighbors and friends by using (create a # for social media).²⁹

Counties should develop specific criteria for when pre-messaging is necessary to alert residents of the hazards around them, and what to do in the event of an imminent threat. Identify what systems counties will utilize to send the messages and who the intended audiences will be. This should include a toolbox of press releases for the media, pre-scripted messages, social media posts, and messaging templates trusted community partners can use to help amplify the message.

The content should include preparing, registering to receive emergency alerts, what to do when they receive specific alerts, and where to get more information. This will decrease a concept called 'milling,' where it becomes fundamental human nature to delay protective action when warned. Instead, individuals delay and search to validate the message they receive and do not take immediate action. If counties can set expectations early, residents will be better prepared to face the threat(s) and take immediate action when warned.

2.5.1 – Identify pre-scripted messages for Animal-related disaster information

Public information and messaging released during the first few operational periods of the Camp Fire did not include animal-specific information and relevant guidance. Exacerbated by rumors and misinformation, community residents who were separated from their household pets and/or livestock began to express frustration. Animal care and control volunteers began to exhibit rogue behavior in carrying out mission assignments to include unlawfully breaking into private property to rescue animals.¹

While the JIC eventually took deliberate strides to mitigate the adverse effects this misinformation was having on the community, it was identified as an area for improvement to include animal-specific information at the outset of the response.¹

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Best Practice Examples for Operational Coordination

3.1 – County identified EOC activation criteria

Incidents that impact an entire county will also affect multiple departments within the county's government. This means that the EOC should be activated. The purpose of a fully activated EOC is to manage large-scale and complex unusual occurrences.

Each department in the county should consider establishing a Department Operations Center (DOC) to maintain operational oversight of events and request resources through the county's EOC. This will ensure proper request and approval processes are followed and limit the span of control of any one organization.³³

3.2 – County has a program to pre-identify EOC Staff

It is a California best practice for counties to create EOC staffing plans of qualified personnel with requisite training.¹⁴ Counties can perform an analysis of operational activities and determine what support is needed from the EOC.²⁶ Execute a staffing analysis to determine requirements for support at each level of EOC activation and, where possible, pre-identify personnel to support staffing plans based on activation levels. Counties should consider implementing a formalized process for staff briefings at the EOC for staff coming on to shifts and all personnel following Management Section meetings.¹¹

Counties should also plan to alert their staff following the onset of a disaster.³⁴ Counties should identify staff who, in the event of a disaster, report directly to the EOC, and train them in EOC activation and operations ahead of time.²⁷

The Planning and Intelligence Section should be assigned to the EOC and given the responsibility to secure a staffing plan for all operational periods.³² The Logistics Section carries out the EOC staffing as requested.¹⁵

3.2.1 – Detail county's program for staffing the EOC

It is a California best practice for counties to maintain accurate EOC rosters to foster timely and efficient communications, including after-hours contact information of response personnel.⁸ Counties should direct personnel to delegate their steady-state duties to someone else when activated to the EOC.¹⁸

It is a California best practice for counties to direct department heads and division managers to maintain current employee phone numbers and develop procedures to recall employees in the event of a declared disaster that occurs

outside the hours of the workday.²⁷ Counties should establish or re-emphasize an automatic response requirement for EOC staff for immediate response incidents.³⁴

During the 2014 Statewide December Storms, local jurisdictions used a manual notification process for EOC personnel and later identified the need to institute an automated system instead.²⁵

3.3 – County has a program for training personnel on SEMS/NIMS/ICS

Following the 2009 Los Angeles County Wildfires, experts agreed that emergency management training at all levels of state and local government, need to be enhanced and provided regularly. Local agencies need to provide consistent SEMS/NIMS/ICS training regularly to ensure new staff is trained and to refresh previously trained staff. This will support EOC management during incident operations that span an extended period.³⁵

This includes training for internal NIMS/ICS/SEMS roles, as well as internal decision-makers and staff supporting the emergency plan. Ensure that job aids or position checklists exist to assist in the execution of various emergency management roles and positions in the EOC, DOC, COOP Team, JIC, shelter operations, and other operations. Ensure job aids or position checklists are validated through actual events or exercises.¹⁸

3.3.1 – Detail training program for First responders

First responders include, but are not limited to, 9-1-1 operators, emergency management, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire/rescue, law enforcement, transportation responders, and utility responders.

It is a California best practice for counties to establish an ongoing schedule of refresher ICS courses for first responders to attend periodically. This would be especially important for first responders who do not often work in an ICS environment.⁸

3.3.2 – Detail training program for UCP Staff

After the 2004 Upper Jones Tract Flood, several agencies stated that there is a need to provide specific training related to establishing a UCP and unified command to state and local agencies to ensure SEMS protocols are followed.³⁶

Emergency management and first responder staff need training on the duties of each job within ICS and where those duties should be carried out. This training should also include position-specific instruction. The roles and responsibilities of all ICS/EOC positions including needed support personnel, equipment, and other necessary tools to manage the incident must be incorporated into regular training.

Training needs to include tabletop exercises, practical applications, and exercises to emphasize the unity of command and current changes in crowd dynamics and strategies to ensure performance objectives are met. This must be training that includes requests for additional personnel or equipment as soon as an issue is identified.³³ Counties should consider training and authorizing field-level commanders to initiate public warnings for evacuations.⁷

3.3.3 – Detail training program for EOC Staff

Increase EOC training specific to section and function and provide more opportunities for drills and exercises.²⁷ Counties should ensure that all positions within the EOC have a checklist that includes a reminder of sign-in/sign-out protocols, as well as creating and maintaining a thorough activity log.²³

Emergency managers should build a cadre of fully trained personnel, where practical, to avoid staff burnout, especially during large-scale, long-term incidents.²³ Better adherence to span of control, one of the core principles of SEMS, could ease the burden placed on emergency managers. Improvement may be found by augmenting staffing levels or re-assigning responsibilities during emergency incidents whenever practicable.²²

During the 2012 Chips Ponderosa Fire, the Northern Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) staff instituted a team concept allowing staff to divide the workload and stagger shifts which provided improved continuity of information sharing within the EOC.²²

Schedule periodic EOC functional exercises of the county's emergency plan, including identifying staffing for the EOC.²⁷ During SEMS training, a greater emphasis can be placed on the appropriate use of technical specialists and EOC position-specific training. For actual EOC activations, include the use of technical specialists on the checklists of Plans Section Chief, Operations Section Chief, and the Director.¹⁵

3.3.4 – Detail training program for EOC Sections Chief

Identify and train primary and alternate personnel for the role of Section Chief.³⁴ Provide section-specific training that incorporates positional training (units and branches) and EOC essentials training.¹⁴ Provide training to EOC personnel on guidelines associated with cost recovery to maximize reimbursement under state and federal regulations. Provide specific training to Finance Section personnel on completion of personnel and equipment record keeping supporting cost capture and auditing.¹¹

3.3.5 – Detail training program for county Agency Representatives

SEMS/NIMS/ICS training is important at the county level.³⁴ It is a California best practice for counties to have a comprehensive training program for department heads, managers, and their staff on how to properly operate using SEMS/NIMS/ICS within the EOC.⁴

Agency representatives at the Orange County Emergency Operations Center were not well trained in their roles, responsibilities, and processes at the EOC. Additional training on ICS principles was needed for all agency representatives and staff members engaged in emergency operations.²⁴

3.3.6 – Executive Policy Group and Elected Officials

Additional training is needed for elected officials, agency representatives, and the general public on the emergency plans, preparedness measures, and expectations during disasters within the county. Elected officials were not well informed regarding their roles during emergencies or plans for disaster coordination within the communities affected during the 2017 Orange County water interruption incident.²⁴

Counties should develop a playbook or other supportive material within their EOP identifying the county elected officials' roles and responsibilities in an emergency or disaster.²⁶ G-402 – NIMS Overview for Senior Officials training helped elected officials in Solano County to ensure that they fit into the most appropriate part of the organizational chart during an incident.

3.4 – County identifies interfaces with EOC

Counties should provide staff with opportunities to train and drill the transition from a single resource to a multiagency incident. Both command and support staff benefit from working on this complex set of procedures.¹³ After the 2004 Upper Jones Tract Flood, several agencies stated that there is a need to provide specific training related to establishing a UCP and unified command to state and local agencies to ensure SEMS protocols are followed.³⁶

3.4.1 – Detail interface between county EOC and the Unified Command or Unified Command Post

The EOC Field Liaison position at the UCP should be documented and integrated into the county EOP with position-specific guidance and checklists.¹

The UCP may not have the same level of situational awareness as the EOC and may presume that recovery is being supported entirely by the EOC. A coordinated transfer of command needs to occur whenever relocating the UCP, especially when transitioning to recovery versus simply deciding to demobilize.³²

3.4.2 – Detail interface between county EOC first responders

There must be representatives from law enforcement and fire/rescue in the Operations Section of the EOC during any activation.³⁷

3.4.3 – Detail interface between county EOC and cities

Counties should provide opportunities in their EOC for city liaison(s)/representative(s) to coordinate activities. Cities should send a trained representative to the county's EOC. However, during significant incidents, city EOCs should also be activated during the response, and early recovery period, to simplify and centralize the coordination of necessary resources.⁴ Consider the placement of local government representatives within the EOC to better support collaboration with the county.¹¹

3.4.4 – Detail interface between county EOC and tribal nations

During the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, Santa Barbara County identified the need to collaborate with their tribal partners to know and understand how the priority of cultural resources is specifically enumerated.²³

Specific protection of cultural resources should be reflected as a priority in emergency plans, such as the Operational Area Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and the Operational Area Emergency Management Plan. Functions associated with fire protection of cultural resources and methods to incorporate tribal representatives should also be included in the plans.²³

3.4.5 – Detail interface between county EOC and Volunteer and Non-Governmental Organizations

It is a California best practice for counties to consider incorporating a dedicated non-governmental organization (NGO) role into the EOC. This provides an opportunity for the county EOCs to leverage input from VOAD or Community Organizations Active during Disaster.¹⁸

Ensure that volunteer organizations are represented in EOCs and ensure field organizations are aware of their deployment.¹⁶ During the 2008 Mid-Year California Fires, there was a lack of knowledge and coordination between emergency managers, volunteer programs, and resources available to assist during disasters.³⁸

Plans should address the use of a Volunteer Management Unit in the unified command structure.³⁹ In training, reinforce the Disaster Service Worker (DSW) responsibility of staff to serve when needed.²⁷ Additionally, plans should address processes for receiving and managing spontaneous volunteers.

3.4.6 – Detail interface between county EOC and Utilities

Having agency representatives from utility companies (i.e., power, water) in the EOC creates a direct line of communication between the EOC and the utilities during a disaster response.²⁵ Coordination with public utilities significantly reduced the impact to critical infrastructure, including power lines, gas pipelines, and drinking water systems, per the 2012 Chips Ponderosa Fire AAR.²² It is recommended that county EOCs coordinate with their respective power companies to ensure representation from a utility company is available to establish a direct line of communication. It is also recommended that utility representatives be included in planning efforts and exercises.¹⁵

3.5 – County has clearly defined minimum acceptable criteria for establishing a UCP

An established UCP aids Unified Commanders with the necessary oversight to manage an event effectively. A UCP also provides a central location to coordinate resources with assisting agencies, operationally track and deploy resources assigned to the incident, monitor the location of threats, improve situational awareness, and make decisions. Unified Commanders can continually evaluate the effectiveness of the objectives for the incident and update or modify them as necessary.³³

3.5.1 – Pre-identify potential UCP locations

Pre-identification of potential UCP locations is important. Counties can pre-identify locations to accommodate staff who may be involved in a UCP during various hazard/threat scenarios. This includes identifying enough available workspace with the capability for security, technology, power, and backup power.³²

When possible, the command post should stay in one place.³³ Moving the UCP during response operations hindered agencies from being able to participate in the unified command during the 2009 Cosco Busan Oil Spill in the San Francisco Bay Area.³⁹ When pre-planning for critical facilities in the county, consider pre-identifying a second/alternate UCP site.³²

3.5.2 – Pre-identify equipment and supplies needed to activate a UCP

To enhance the UCP, certain supplies are optimal. For example, during the first couple of nights of protests, the UCP did not have large maps for operations. The maps would have assisted in situational awareness and the ability to track resources and crowd movement during the 2020 civil unrest in Los Angeles.³³

3.5.3 – Pre-identify UCP and representation

Connectivity with other agencies: Having other agency representatives at the UCP was extremely important for the coordination of resources. Not only did this

allow for timely information sharing but it allowed decision-makers from those agencies to maintain an adequate level of situational awareness.³³

3.5.4 – UCP Roles & Responsibilities

The concept of a unified command is an essential part of ICS. Counties should ensure that appropriate jurisdictions are part of the unified command for incidents involving multiple jurisdictions with statutory authority. In the case where the incident revolves around privately owned systems, everyone in the unified command must be aware of the actions taken by the responsible parties to eliminate duplicative or unnecessary actions by other entities on the scene. Having the responsible party part of a unified command will greatly assist in the elimination of duplicative and unnecessary actions.⁸

The unified command needs to be established early in the response system.³⁶ Implementation of the unified command structure resulted in successful and efficient operations during the 2010 San Bruno Explosion. Unified command and strong coordination between fire and law enforcement were key to evacuating the residents.⁴⁰

Representatives from all levels (local, regional, state, federal, tribal, and non-governmental) should be included as part of the unified command to share information related to local resources.³² An information board containing the names and contact information for the various SEMS functions should be posted at the UCP.³⁶ After the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, county participation in unified command structure was formalized in an MOU and incorporated into the Santa Barbara Operational Area Contingency Plan.²³

During the 2009 Los Angeles County Wildfires, implementation of the unified command structure resulted in successful and efficient operations. Unified command and strong coordination between fire and law enforcement were key to evacuating large numbers of residents and animals threatened by the rapidly burning fires during the Station Fire.³⁵

Establishment, location, and communication protocols of UCPs need to be incorporated into training. Counties should consider an existing facility for the UCP during extended operational incidents.³³

3.5.5 – Detail the span of control during complex incidents

Counties should ensure policy information and overarching objectives are communicated to multiple command posts to facilitate information flow and resource coordination.³³

3.6 – County has clearly defined minimum acceptable criteria for establishing an EOC Facility

- Emergency Operations Center
 - The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOC may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, and medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., federal, state, regional, tribal, city, county), or some combination thereof.
- Department Operations Center (DOC)
 - An EOC specific to a single department or agency where the focus is on internal agency incident management and response. They are often linked to and, in most cases, are physically represented in a combined agency EOC by authorized agent(s) for the department or agency.
- Virtual Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)
 - An EOC that functions with a virtual platform, which has a variety of technology that moves the EOC from a physical location into “cyberspace.”

Jurisdictions establish EOCs to meet their unique requirements and needs. Therefore, no two EOCs are designed the same. FEMA has provided tools and resources for building or maintaining EOCs, in accordance with NIMS, which can be found here: [NIMS Components - Guidance and Tools](#)

3.6.1 – Identify county’s primary EOC location

Since the 1964 Alaskan Earthquake, experts have agreed that “there must be an adequate operations headquarters for [emergency management].” This should include heat, power, lights, and space for the operational personnel. There should also be controlled access for those who work in headquarters, and those who are not involved in the emergency operations.²

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, remote access was used by State Operations Center (SOC) staff. This proved for the first time that the SOC location could be managed with a virtual platform. For continuity of government purposes during a pandemic, an EOC should be able to function as a VEOC.

3.6.2 – Detail accessibility of county’s EOC

Ensure space provided for personnel within the EOC is sufficient for individuals using wheelchairs or other assistive devices.¹¹

The EOC should be prepared to coordinate housing solutions for staff responding to the EOC for more than two weeks. Assess and procure equipment for use in the EOC as sleeping quarters (e.g., murphy beds, reclining chairs, sleeping trailer). Designate a separate space for mental health services within the EOC or in a trailer on site.¹¹ An EOC should ideally be designed to be survivable from a significant earthquake or catastrophic storm activity. Consider having meal rations on hand to overcome temporary fluctuations in logistics chain management.

The size and layout of the county’s EOC, while adequate for past emergencies, was not fully sufficient to support a large-scale, multi-jurisdictional, multi-operational period, and complex response such as the 2018 Camp Fire. In addition, the EOC was not equipped with the appropriate technology to support an efficient and effective response by the County. For instance, given the widespread and dynamic nature of the Camp Fire and all the information it produced, there was no feasible way to adequately display critical incident-related information in support of a common operating picture in the County EOC. Informational displays within the EOC meant to project the common operating picture were inadequate, which hindered situational awareness. Improvements to the EOC could facilitate more efficient and effective management of incidents in the future.¹

3.6.3 – Detail the county’s EOC backup power capabilities

Ensure the emergency generator is connected to the circuits that power the pre-designated location of the EOC.⁴

3.6.4 – The county’s alternate EOC location

Continuity of operations plans dictates the need to pre-identify alternate sites for the EOC in case the original location cannot be used.⁴ The county should identify and, where necessary, establish memorandums of agreement with alternate facilities from which it can relocate to and maintain continuity of operations in the wake of a large-scale response. The county should also regularly exercise such relocation.¹

Identify an EOC Set-Up team.¹⁴ Evaluate triggers for an increased readiness posture and EOC activation for de-energization events; for EOC activations, identify best practices for the duration of activation to balance the need for coverage and to make the activation as short as possible.¹⁸

The EOC startup guide needs to have additional phone numbers for key county staff and emergency response partners. Copies of maps need to be pre-positioned in the EOC to assist in incident/event tracking. A GIS technical specialist needs to be available to EOC staff during activations.

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Best Practice Examples for Critical Transportation

4.1 – County has a current, approved Evacuation Plan

It is a California best practice for counties to develop an evacuation plan that is simple, functional, and can be scaled up or down depending on the incident. The evacuation plan should contain considerations for those with disabilities and others with AFN.²⁶ For example, having MOUs within, and outside, the jurisdiction to provide accessible transportation services 24/7 to evacuate individuals with AFN. Evacuation plans should identify specific actions for road closures and enforce them. Include early signage and remote notification if possible.¹⁰

Improve communication with neighboring counties on evacuation planning through a regional planning effort.²⁴ Develop, in conjunction with special districts, cities, counties, regions, and state stakeholders, a truly inter-jurisdictional coordinated mass evacuation plan. Carry out evacuation drills with voluntary resident participation to educate the public and train staff in evacuation techniques.¹

Some suggested guidance documents can be found at:

- [FEMA Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place Guidance for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Partners](#)
- [Caltrans Transit Emergency Planning Guidelines](#)
- [Caltrans Rural Transit Emergency Planning Guidance](#)
- [CDFA - State of California Best Practices for Allowing Pets on Public Transit](#)

A best practice example of planning tools for critical transportation and evacuation can be found in the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) *Critical Transportation Toolkit* which can be found here: www.bayareauasi.org

4.1.1 – County has a current, approved fueling/re-fueling plan

It is a California best practice for counties to develop a fuel plan to include prioritization, security, movement, and alternative fueling sources. For government-owned fuel stations, consider installing manual transfer switches to support disaster-installed generators that support the pumping of fuel. Procure manual pumps to extract fuel from de-energized in-ground tanks. Counties should consider obtaining access to a fueling vehicle for the county to facilitate refueling of generators and vehicles when commercial resources are not available or cannot keep up with demand.¹⁸

4.1.2 – Plan is consistent with Standard Statewide Evacuation Terminology

During the Bobcat Fire in LA County in October of 2020, while most agencies were using common terminology, some cities, along with the media, were still using the terms voluntary and mandatory when it came to issuing evacuation alerts, further confusing residents who were also getting emergency alerts from other agencies with the terms Warning and Order.²⁹

Community members in San Diego County highlighted the potential for confusion over terminology (Evacuation Order vs. Evacuation Warning). They suggested this could be reduced if alert messages included a hyperlink to definitions.¹³

Standardized language for evacuations can be found here:
www.calalerts.org/evacuations

4.1.3 – Plan includes temporary evacuation points and/or rally points

Identify strategic locations for community/neighborhood survival areas within the county. Accessible transportation considerations should be incorporated for evacuees to get to a temporary evacuation point and beyond to an emergency shelter or non-congregate shelter. Harden these locations against hazards/threats (i.e., fires), and socialize these locations and the availability of transportation with the community.¹

4.1.4 – Plan includes pre-identified triggers for evacuation warning/order

It is a California best practice for counties to have a process to ensure positive contact with evacuation decision-makers simultaneously no matter the day of the week or the time of day.²⁰

Planning for evacuation should be closely tied with planning for alert and warning. When an incident requiring immediate evacuation of multiple jurisdictions occurs, the coordinated notification must be a priority so that the evacuation process can be effective and efficient.

4.2 – County has a current, approved re-entry/re-population plan

Re-entry and re-population may occur incrementally and should be a key priority for the county. During the Camp Fire incident, residents vocalized their desire to return to their homes, and county staff recognized that repopulation would be a pivotal factor in community recovery and healing. In tandem, availing opportunities for people to return to their homes eased the need to house people at shelters.¹

4.2.1 – Plan includes pre-identified triggers for re-entry/re-population

Document the process established for repopulation to formalize the process and ensure continued coordination in repopulation events.¹

Develop a tiered re-entry protocol that accounts for response personnel, essential functions, major companies and employers, and other organizations vital to the return of the evacuated population while balancing the need to execute life safety and debris management operations.¹¹

Formalize the processes of allowing residents private access to their property following the evacuation, providing residents with environmental health resources as appropriate, and supplying mental and behavioral health resources during repopulation.¹

4.2.2 – County re-entry/re-population plan was created in collaboration with the whole community

Repopulation strategies should contain considerations for those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Develop repopulation strategies that include considerations for public health and safety in a variety of conditions. This should be included in the county's PIO strategy.²⁶

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Best Practice Examples for Fatality Management

5.1 – County has a current plan for Fatality Management

5.1.1 – Detail program for remains recovery

A best practice learned from the Camp Fire is to document the integrated approach to recovering remains for large-scale incidents.¹

Document the process for handling remains once they have been discovered and enhance the county's access to anthropologists, forensic pathologists, and others involved in the process of handling remains. Pre-establish the process for the transport of remains and assess available resources, within the county and in neighboring jurisdictions, to assist in this process.¹ Establish a coordinated process through the Family Assistance Center to retrieve familial DNA for use in the Rapid DNA Testing kits.

Document the process for remains identification during a large-scale incident and maintain established relationships with technology providers developed through the Camp Fire. Train on the integration of search and rescue, urban search and rescue, anthropologists, and coroner's investigators to optimize the process.¹

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Best Practice Examples for Infrastructure Systems

6.1 – County has a current Response Plan for Critical Facilities and Infrastructure

It is a California best practice for counties to review for alignment the plans of critical facilities and infrastructure based on perceived threats, incorporating restoration as well as recovery actions.¹⁰

The Federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has pre-identified sixteen sectors* of critical infrastructure. These include:

- Chemical Sector
- Commercial Facilities Sector
- Communications Sector
- Critical Manufacturing Sector
- Dams Sector
- Defense Industrial Base Sector
- Emergency Services Sector
- Energy Sector
- Financial Services Sector
- Food and Agriculture Sector
- Government Facilities Sector
- Healthcare and Public Health Sector
- Information Technology Sector
- Nuclear Reactors, Materials, and Waste Sector
- Transportation Systems Sector
- Water and Wastewater Systems Sector

Optional additional sectors may include:

- Faith-Based Sector
- Cultural and Historical Sector
- Education Sector (i.e., schools, colleges, universities, and childcare)

Additional information on DHS' critical infrastructure sectors can be found here: www.cisa.gov/critical-infrastructure-sectors

While counties do not need to have a plan for every piece of critical infrastructure, emergency managers should consider identifying each facility in their jurisdiction which falls under these sectors, establishing a connection with the facility's emergency manager, and reviewing site-specific emergency plans

* - Sector is DHS term, not an ICS-compliant term

to ensure that their needs are properly included into the county's emergency plan.

During the Orange County water interruption of 2017, emergency managers recognized that a utility interruption annex did not exist and there was limited guidance on how the community should coordinate a major utility interruption.²⁴

It is a California best practice for counties to inventory and map all telecommunications infrastructure in the county, including fiber routes and secured/unsecured fiber.⁷

It is a California best practice for counties to develop a historic preservation plan to properly identify all historic and cultural resources and strategies for protecting them during an event.¹⁰ Counties should also work with Tribal Nations to map cultural resources.⁷

6.2 – County has a current Damage Assessment plan

6.2.1 – Identify the roles and responsibilities of damage assessment teams

Ensure the Initial Damage Estimation (IDE) process is completed by the county before a Governor's request for a Presidential declaration of a major disaster is submitted. This process must be completed correctly and consistently.⁴

Coordinate the Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process with a county point of contact, not via individual cities.³⁴ Counties should take advantage of skilled staff, such as damage assessment and builder inspectors, to minimize the time needed to complete damage assessments. This would also assist the jurisdiction by reducing the workload on staff, so they can be used in other capacities.⁴

6.2.2 – Identify training for damage assessment teams

There needs to be more training on the hazards of damaged buildings. County's need to coordinate with the private sector on the risks associated with earthquake damage.⁴

Best Practice Examples for Logistics and Supply Chain Management

7.1 – County has a current Resource Request Program

7.1.1 – Detail county resource request program

Logistics requests during incidents should be clearly defined, including the type, number, and destination location of each resource.³⁷ County emergency plans should include mutual aid and ensure that the EOC is aware of all mutual aid requests and authorizes deployments.¹⁶ Additionally, counties should prepare frontline response agencies for worst-case scenarios, particularly fires, floods, earthquakes, hazardous material, and mass casualty incidents.¹³ Counties should standardize and pre-identify response/recovery teams and make them ready for dispatch to any county affected by future significant incidents.³⁴

[Please see the FEMA Supply Chain Resilience Guide for guidance.](#)

7.1.2 – Detail ICP resource request program

There should be a consolidation of resource requests established at the Incident Command Post. The ordering and procurement of resources must come from one, identified source. In most cases, this will be through the Incident Commander or the Logistics Section that is established to represent all responders and from all disciplines and agencies.³⁷

7.1.3 – Detail city and special district resource request program

Logistics should specify a process where needs that remain unfilled at the local level can be procured through a county process. Local jurisdictions need to be clear about what function the requested individual will be performing before the individual is deployed via a mutual aid request. A deployed individual also needs to be dedicated to performing that assignment for a set period to prevent the necessity of refilling that position immediately.⁴

7.1.4 – Detail out-of-county resource request program

Identify how many resources the county will make available for out-of-county response and under what conditions.¹⁷

7.1.5 – Detail the private sector/NGO resource request program

Develop scopes of work for positions that may need to be contracted or assigned to trained volunteers to meet the emergency response objectives. Procure, develop contracts with vendors, or develop MOUs with organizations to provide durable medical equipment required in shelters to support the general population and those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Develop Master Service Agreements with other organizations that

include the scope for positions that may be filled, as appropriate, and specify compensation issues.²⁶

A list of local vendors and their 24-hour contact information should be developed. If possible, MOUs or contracts with vendors of critical emergency response resources should be entered into before events. The method of payments to vendors in emergencies should be clearly defined at the time that the resource is procured.³⁷

7.1.6 – Detail evacuation resources available to the county

It is a California best practice for counties to develop a comprehensive inventory of evacuation resources including transportation providers, the number of assets, capabilities of transportation assets, ability to accommodate accessibility for those with disabilities and others with AFN, consideration for pets, drivers capable of operating transportation resources, and contact information of resource providers.²⁶

7.2 – County has a current Mutual Aid Plan

The California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement requires signatories to develop plans to mobilize public and private sector resources to cope with any type of disaster (see also GC § 8615). Response agencies should plan for receiving mutual aid from many participants. Include in plans reporting, staging, deployment, supporting, and demobilization protocols.¹³

7.2.1 – Detail the county's resource deployment program

In past incidents, some jurisdictions have self-deployed mutual aid resources and did not coordinate with the affected unified command.³⁸

7.2.2 – Detail the county's resource arrival program

Mutual aid arrived quickly, and personnel were flexible in the roles and responsibilities that they were assigned during the 2004 Upper Jones Tract Flood incident.³⁶

7.2.3 – Detail the county's resource staging program

It is a California best practice for counties to review existing plans and make updates as necessary to include a process for identifying and establishing staging locations outside the affected area to send and stage emergency vehicles during mass evacuation incidents.¹

It is a California best practice for counties to identify multiple, pre-vetted locations for staging areas within the county. Harden these locations against potential disasters and socialize these locations with response agencies. Document the process of establishing a staging area immediately upon incident

initiation as well as the process for communicating the location of the staging area with response partners.¹

The staging area provided the needed infrastructure to effectively manage resources, including many personnel contributing to the response through mutual aid. During the Camp Fire, the staging area established a central location for reporting, resource staging, and overall incident management as the UCP was co-located at Butte College near the resource staging area. Document the integration of dispatchers into the staging area and clearly define their roles and responsibilities.¹

7.2.4 – Detail the county’s resource demobilization program

It is recommended that all jurisdictions ensure their respective demobilization procedures are consistent with the SEMS-approved course of instruction and adhere to those procedures during the demobilization of resources.⁴¹

7.2.5 – Detail county’s resource scalability program

Counties should consider how to effectively expand an incident from single mutual aid resources to complex mutual aid resources. [NIMS Incident Complexity Guide](#) outlines five different types of incident complexity. Counties should provide staff with opportunities to train and drill the transition from a simple, single resource incident (Type V) to a complex, large-scale, multiagency incident (Type I). Both command and support staff benefit from working on this complex set of procedures.¹³

Additional information on incident types can be found in FEMA's National Incident Management System Incident Complexity Guide (January 2021) here: www.fema.gov as well as the *National Incident Management System Guideline for Resource Management Preparedness* (June 2021) to plan for resource management which can be found here: www.fema.gov/nims-guideline-resource

7.2.6 – Detail the county’s Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) program

During the 1991 East Bay Hills Fire, local emergency management staff from each community were overwhelmed. Oakland responded by accepting emergency managers from Santa Clara and Contra Costa as mutual aid staffing.¹³ Counties should examine their EOC activation protocol and coordination process to allow emergency management staff from adjacent jurisdictions to be incorporated into EOC.¹⁶

It is a California best practice for counties to define roles and responsibilities, communicate them to local government partners, and exercise them. Consider the potential for building out the concept of sub-regional hubs in which the

county staff augment city EOCs to support the influx of residents from unincorporated areas.²⁶

7.2.7 – Detail the county’s Law Enforcement Mutual Aid program

Although managing the large influx of resources proved difficult during the Camp Fire, processes were quickly established for the successful integration of mutual aid into the local response. Mutual aid personnel were able to follow local plans and procedures under the leadership of local law enforcement.¹

The use of law enforcement mutual aid was very effective during the evacuation phase of the 2017 Oroville Spillway Incident, with more than 188,000 people moved to safety in a matter of hours.²⁰ Law enforcement mutual aid coordinators should consider including tribal law enforcement in the mutual aid system to increase coordination and collaboration.¹⁵

7.3 – Resource Management Plan coordinates with Emergency Support Functions

7.3.1 – Detail the role of an Agency Representative vs. Emergency Support Function Coordinator

Following the 2014 Napa Earthquake, the issue of understanding the difference between an Agency Representative and an Emergency Support Function Coordinator (ESF) Coordinator in the EOC remained unclear. The recommendation is to first define clearly what an ESF Coordinator is, including roles and responsibilities. Next, develop a robust formal ESF Coordinator curriculum and train people to that curriculum. To go one step further in eliminating any confusion between an ESF Coordinator and an Agency Representative, combine Agency Representative training with ESF Coordinator training.⁴²

7.3.2 – Detail the roles and responsibilities of each ESF Coordinator

Solano County suggests that counties clearly define what an ESF Coordinator is including roles and responsibilities. Next, develop a standardized ESF Coordinator curriculum and train people to that curriculum.⁴²

7.3.3 – Recommend that the counties establish and integrate ESFs with CA ESFs

The following California ESFs are included in the State Emergency Plan (SEP):

- CA-ESF #1 – Transportation
- CA-ESF #2 – Communications
- CA-ESF #3 – Construction and Engineering
- CA-ESF #4 – Fire and Rescue (including Search & Rescue)
- CA-ESF #5 – Management
- CA-ESF #6 – Care and Shelter
- CA-ESF #7 – Resources

- CA-ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical
- CA-ESF #10 – Hazardous Materials
- CA-ESF #11 – Food and Agriculture
- CA-ESF #12 – Utilities
- CA-ESF #13 – Law Enforcement (including Search & Rescue and Evacuation)
- CA-ESF #14 – Recovery
- CA-ESF #15 – Public information
- CA-ESF #17 – Volunteer and Donations management
- CA-ESF #18 – Cybersecurity

Additional information on California Emergency Functions can be found here: [Emergency Support Functions](#)

The following Federal ESFs are included in the National Response Framework:

- F-ESF #1 – Transportation
- F-ESF #2 – Communications
- F-ESF #3 – Public Works and Engineering
- F-ESF #4 – Firefighting
- F-ESF #5 – Information and Planning
- F-ESF #6 – Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing, and Human Services
- F-ESF #7 – Logistics
- F-ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services
- F-ESF #9 – Search and Rescue
- F-ESF #10 – Oil and Hazardous Materials Response
- F-ESF #11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources
- F-ESF #12 – Energy
- F-ESF #13 – Public Safety and Security
- F-ESF #14 – Cross-sector Business and Infrastructure
- F-ESF #15 – External Affairs

Additional information on Federal ESFs can be found here: [National Preparedness Frameworks](#)

7.4 – County Resource Management Program coordinates with Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector resources

It is a California best practice for counties to develop pre-event contracts, in alignment with federal procurement requirements, to support efficient resource requests and procurement during and following disasters. Develop standby contracts with transportation providers for use in future emergencies.¹¹

Alameda County community members identified that there are volunteer and NGO mutual aid networks in parts of California, such as the Mutual Aid Hub

which can be found at: www.MutualAidHub.org. San Francisco County emergency management officials suggest that full-time equivalent position may be needed to effectively maintain a resource management inventory/database for a large jurisdiction.

Business entities were not well represented at the Emergency Operations Center and did not receive situational awareness information to support their decision-making processes during the 2017 Orange County Water Interruption incident. Businesses believed they did not receive sufficient and timely information on the potential impacts of the event to make business operation decisions.²⁴

7.5 – County has current Volunteer and Donations Management Plan

Counties should identify the strategy for volunteer management overall, create a working group of partners, and develop a Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan and/or Annex to the EOP and incorporate these findings from the Camp Fire.¹ It is a California best practice for counties to have a current Volunteer and Donations Management Plan.¹⁰ The plan should be trained to and then validated through a planned exercise.¹

7.5.1 – Detail the county's volunteer engagement program

Counties should plan, prepare to deal with, and use spontaneous volunteer resources early in an incident.¹³ Counties should implement and update a plan that will enable local and state government agencies to effectively utilize volunteers in a timely and safe manner, even during potentially hazardous incidents (i.e., an oil spill response).³²

After the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, Santa Barbara County identified the need to develop a Spontaneous Volunteer Plan.²³ Consistent policies should be implemented across all jurisdictions to provide similar health and safety messages.³²

Scalable

It is a California best practice for counties to ensure the Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan which identifies multiple strategies flexible enough to scale up or down depending on the size of the incident and allows for a robust volunteer system. Counties should pre-identify specific documentation and form requirements for Emergency Volunteer Centers (EVCs), including badging/credentialing, and volunteer tracking.¹

Counties should ensure that messaging regarding the volunteer deployment process is clear and persistent across multiple mediums.¹

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Volunteer groups provided invaluable support and assistance in non-suppression, support roles, freeing fire suppression personnel to focus on firefighting activities during the 2007 Orange County Santiago Fire.¹⁷

Formal structures for volunteer engagement are effective to support response and recovery efforts.²³ There are many variations of CERTs (e.g., Neighbor Emergency Response Team (NERT), etc.). Counties should consider developing training programs for residents and employers in emergency response techniques.²⁷

During the North Complex Fire, Butte County activated its CERT as a call center to provide information to those impacted by the fire. They had up-to-date GIS maps from the Sheriff's Office as well as the county's information services office.

CERT teams can support the first responders during wildland fires but need appropriate training.¹⁶ Through county plan development and other forums, counties can provide training to local first responders on the capacity and proper involvement of volunteer resource teams, such as CERTs, Medical Reserve Corps, Volunteers in Police Service, and others.¹⁶

7.5.2 – Detail the county's Just-in-Time Volunteer program

Just-in-time training for volunteers can be developed and organized very quickly and efficiently.²³ Counties should develop a policy in every emergency organization to promote and use volunteers.¹³

7.5.3 – Detail the county's public information strategy about acceptable donations

Utilize media to provide information on donations: "Cash is always best," and "what is not needed." This is a message which must go out at the beginning of the disaster. It keeps unnecessary items being donated and provides the disaster survivors with what is needed most—financial assistance to meet emergency needs and/or long-term recovery and rebuilding.⁴⁰

7.5.4 – Detail the county's program for handling physical donations

Counties may consider establishing agreements with facilities the collection and sorting point for unsolicited donated goods following a disaster. Receiving depots should be activated immediately. Counties cannot afford to wait to see if goods are donated. Planners must assume they are coming and prepare for their arrival.¹⁹

Butte County officials identified that they should establish an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary team of county stakeholders to examine and document

the donations management-specific best practices and lessons learned during the Camp Fire response and recovery efforts. Further, this team developed a list of recommendations to inform the development of a Donations Management guidance document.¹

7.5.5 – Detail the county’s program for handling financial donations

A county plan should include in-kind and monetary donations. Counties should consider establishing an MOU with partner agencies to be responsible for donated goods. The MOU could guide redirection of in-kind goods as needed.⁴⁰

Create collaboration with an existing foundation, such as California Veterinary Medical Association, to collect financial donations, and then distribute based on participation.¹⁶

7.5.6 – Detail the county’s volunteer and donations management tool

Counties should consider developing/establishing a database management tool capable of tracking available donations, including volunteers who volunteer their time.¹⁶ Community members in Monterey County created an online portal for managing volunteers and donations: www.montereyco.recovers.org. Emergency Volunteer Centers (EVCs) could help to reduce the burden on the Office of Emergency Management in managing volunteers.

7.6 – Points of Distribution/Dispensing

A Commodity Distribution Plan should be created to support and ensure coordinated and efficient delivery of commodities to community members impacted by emergencies.²⁴

A comprehensive commodity distribution process should be included in the response operations framework with details on the county responsibilities for point of dispensing operations.²⁴

7.6.1 – Detail point of distribution roles and responsibilities

Each point of distribution (POD) needs to have a lead individual who is responsible for site management, communications to the EOC, etc. Security and traffic control coordination needs to be provided at each POD.²⁴

7.6.2 – Pre-identified locations which could potentially be used as a POD

POD locations should be pre-identified and accessible through public transportation routes with enough staff or the right equipment to be as effective as needed.²⁴

Best Practice Examples for Mass Care Services

8.1 – County has a Current Shelter Plan

It is a California best practice for counties to have a Care and Shelter plan as an annex to the county's emergency plan, or as a separate standalone document. The plan should detail the plans and procedures to ensure consistency of approach towards shelter management.²⁶ The existing shelter inventory should identify shelter sites that have backup generation capabilities for future de-energization events.²⁶

[FEMA Planning Considerations Evacuation and Shelter in Place](#)

8.1.1 – Detail the county's mass care and shelter roles and responsibilities

Counties and state agencies reported successful collaborations during 2014 California Drought with non-emergency management local nonprofit organizations to assist in carrying out drought-related activities, such as housing and utility assistance, relocation assistance, and provision of bottled water.²⁸

Some jurisdictions have delegated the responsibility of shelter operations to the American Red Cross (ARC). After the 2013 fire season, Riverside County Office of Emergency Services advised they would engage in an ongoing effort to update their Care and Shelter Plan to provide clearer direction to the county staff in the event ARC is not available to assist with sheltering operations in the initial phase of disaster response.⁴³

When local agencies initiate shelter operations to be relieved or augmented by ARC or another community partner, it is essential to ensure a smooth transition. Included in these considerations should address the specific concerns related to the handling and sharing of shelter client information.²⁶

8.1.2 – Detail the county's training program for shelter staff

It is a California best practice for counties to develop training to orient EOC and field level care and shelter staff on the new organization of the Care and Shelter Branch and establish a communications pathway and workflow from the EOC to the field. Expand opportunities for shelter operations training for human services/social services personnel.²⁶

During the check-in process of evacuees at the shelter, there should be a form or tracking method of who is currently in and who has temporarily or permanently left the shelter.¹⁰

8.2 – County Shelter Plan was created in collaboration with the Whole Community

Capabilities related to providing care and shelter services to populations with disabilities and others with AFN, should continue to be developed and formally documented in a care and shelter plan to provide specific and clear procedures and policies for shelter workers.²⁶

Some examples include:

- Avoiding institutionalization of individuals coming from independent living environments by being able to address acute medical needs at shelters
- Allowing service animals inside shelters

8.2.1 – Detail the integration of cultural competence into mass care services

During the 2004 Upper Jones Tract Flood, migrant workers were hesitant to use mass care and shelter services. The AAR suggested counties use a non-governmental organization to interface with the affected survivors.³⁶ Community feedback from San Bernardino County indicated that it is important to name the shelter as a safe space and specific documents if any, a shelter client should have on hand to enter. Tulare County community members also suggested that a multi-lingual hotline be set up so undocumented individuals can find a safe place. This could also allow trusted sources to call in on their behalf to ask important questions during a crisis.

8.2.2 – Detail the integration of Individuals with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities into mass care services

It is essential to provide sufficient medical personnel and supplies to support shelter operations for individuals with acute medical needs arriving from institutionalized settings. While such individuals may arrive with staff from their respective facilities, plans should address the more realistic scenario that staff are affected by the disaster and qualified supplemental personnel to deliver care services will be needed.

Establishing procedures at skilled nursing facilities, long-term health care facilities, and board and care homes to evacuate patients/clients to “like” facilities help ensure individual needs are met without going to general shelters.

The county's office of emergency services, in partnership with the county's primary mass care agency, may develop a robust list of personal, medical, behavioral, and mental health personnel and supply resources including durable medical goods (wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc.), mechanisms for obtaining and supplying consumable medical equipment, and services (e.g., pharmaceutical services, personal care attendants), for immediate deployment, in the event a shelter is opened where there is a need for support

of acute medical needs or other access and functional needs, including among individuals who live in group settings within the evacuated population.⁴⁴

8.2.3 – Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged individuals into mass care services

The California Department of Social Services operates a program known as Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST). It is a California best practice for counties to use the FAST approach for gaining awareness of critical access and functional needs in congregate and non-congregate shelters.

Expand opportunities for FAST program training for human services/social services personnel.²⁶

This includes the establishment and documentation of communication pathways between FAST program support and the EOC to prevent delays in situational information and resources.²⁶

8.2.4 – Detail the integration of underserved populations into mass care services

Santa Cruz County provided shelter clients with tents within a structure, for social distancing and privacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Madera County, the Red Cross utilized a private contractor to identify and reserve motel/hotel rooms for non-congregate sheltering purposes. It is a best practice to incorporate wellness checks for evacuees in both congregate and non-congregate settings, either through the utilization of FAST, telephone check-in, or other types of platforms for disposition and meeting the health and safety needs of clients.

You can also find guidance here: [Mass Care and Shelter Guidance for Local Governments during a Communicable Disease Outbreak or Pandemic](#)

8.2.5 – Detail the integration of individuals who are unhoused into mass care services

Explore the unique considerations for the chronically unhoused population when they utilize the services of emergency shelters. This population will need a different set of social services and support inside a shelter and when the emergency shelters close; this may impact the decision of when to close the shelter.²⁶

8.3 – County Shelter Plan includes pets and large animals

Counties should work with county agricultural commissioners and the local office of emergency services to identify the best methods of supporting pet populations and at what SEMS level during emergency activations.³¹

Counties need to develop and practice their animal plans. This should include linkage with law enforcement and fire agencies. Emergency plans also need to

address possible co-location of human and animal shelters, including support of service animals who may accompany people with disabilities. More work with non-profit animal care groups should be considered to ensure they integrate into disaster response.¹⁶

Emergency animal sheltering may incorporate the needs of all major categories: search and rescue, shelter locations, and veterinarian care. Pre-incident planning is needed to identify resources: people, places, populations, and types of animals per jurisdiction.³⁰

8.4 – County plan details the Local Assistance Center program

Local Assistance Centers (LAC) provide a central location for disaster survivors to meet face-to-face with numerous state and local agency representatives, elected officials, and insurance companies.³¹ However, the local government must be prepared for opening LACs quickly, with ample advertisements in a variety of formats to the general public to accommodate the whole community.³⁵

- Community Resource Center (CRC)
 - Provides resources, referrals, information, and support. They can assist individuals and families in accessing resources in their community by providing information and referrals for basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, employment, and transportation.
- Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)
 - A readily accessible facility or mobile office where applicants may visit for information about FEMA or other disaster assistance programs. Provides guidance regarding disaster recovery assistance and programs for survivors.
- Family Assistance Center (FAC)
 - Provides services and information to the family members of those killed and injured, as well as those people otherwise impacted by an incident. The same place utilized for a Reunification Center may be used for the Family Assistance Center.
- Local Assistance Center
 - A one-stop-shop with critical government services for residents who have been impacted by an incident. Provides services to assist with replacing lost or destroyed vital documents (ID, financial information, etc.) and get connected with support services.

8.4.1 – Identify the county's roles and responsibilities for a LAC

Collaborate with state and federal partners to formalize plans associated with LAC. Detail LAC procedures in a formal LAC plan or standard operating procedure.³ The LAC plan should include a hotline and a shuttle service to include paratransit services. The plan should have in-person or telephonic

foreign language and ASL languages services available. Also, the plan may provide a number or email on LAC messaging materials for people to request a reasonable accommodation

County offices of emergency services should coordinate the opening of a LAC. Once the LAC is operational then a different agency or department can manage the LAC. The managing agency or department should work with Cal OES Individual Assistance (IA) staff to gain advice and guidelines for running an effective LAC.⁴³

8.4.2 – Detail the county’s pre-identified LAC locations

It is a California best practice for counties to pre-identify facilities which meet minimum standards and can be used as evacuation shelters and/or LAC.³

Site Selection

Considerations should include⁴⁵:

- Compatibility with the Office of Safety and Health Assessment (OSHA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements including facility size.
- Near individuals and families affected by the disaster.
- Convenient access to public transportation (e.g., highways, main thoroughfares, mass transit).
- Secured, lighted parking areas and walkways adequate for the number of LAC participants and clients.
- Close to available food services (e.g., restaurant, coffee shop).
- Adequate office space for processing applicants and confidential discussions with clients and LAC participants.
- A sufficient number of telephone and data lines.
- Appropriate lighting, heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing capabilities, and restrooms.
- Availability of adequate janitorial and waste disposal services.

It is important to collaborate with state and local agencies when selecting LAC locations.¹⁶ Counties should pre-identify LAC locations and plan enough security, so agencies do not need to pack up equipment each night and re-setup each morning.⁴

Identify locations for LACs based on demographic analyses and community needs that can predictably host LACs for future events, so that the community can anticipate where to find services available from LACs even when they are not able to receive communications due to de-energization. This should include facilities that can survive the weather and lack of electricity.¹⁸

8.4.3 – Detail the county’s program for re-unification

The establishment of a FAC was crucial in providing information to parents and in reunifying families during the City of Santa Monica Shooting in 2013.^{[37](#)}

Reunification of victims with their families was delayed due to confusion between hospital staff and law enforcement investigators. Law enforcement should assign one person to the hospitals to clarify outstanding issues regarding patients and the investigation.^{[37](#)}

In some incidents, the Red Cross participated in the LAC to provide assistance and reunification services to survivors.^{[40](#)}

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Best Practice Examples Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services

9.1 – County identified mental health support for emergency responders and frontline personnel

Emergency plans should also plan for the mental health of emergency responders and frontline personnel.⁴⁶ County Public Health and Mental Health Departments also worked closely with the Red Cross to address mental health needs and to ensure adequate services were being provided following the San Bruno explosion in 2010.⁴⁰

9.1.1 – Detail the county's program for peer support

Beginning with the 2000 Alaska Airlines Crash, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) became available through local agencies. As the incident continued and expanded, additional CISM resources were available from various agency chaplains and other local and federal sources.⁴⁶ Consider bringing mental health professionals into the EOC.¹⁸

After the 2013 Santa Monica Shootings, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services were made available to first responders and others affected. These services were critical to the recovery of first responders.³⁷

9.2 – County identified mental health support for disaster survivors

The local government should plan to provide mental health services for disaster survivors and meet the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and others with AFN. Some of these issues are also state and federal concerns.¹⁶

Anticipate the need to scale-up mental health support and crisis management services based on potential demand, which may include identifying additional wrap-around services to augment current capabilities and contracting with service providers to expand the county's ability to provide services.¹⁸

Assess mental health and medical resources available within the county to support the EOC, evacuation shelters, and LAC. Determine what crisis counseling and spiritual care services will be offered at the LAC. Determine what EOC activation level will require a separately designated county behavioral wellness lead in the EOC. Develop a plan to support overall health in the EOC, with considerations for mental health and overall wellness.¹¹

Staff was also available at the LAC for crisis counseling and medical needs. Agencies at the LAC coordinated well, and supported decisions made when

the evacuation center transitioned to a LAC. These agencies worked together to maximize resources and were sensitive to survivors' needs and issues.[40](#)

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Best Practice Examples for Operational Communications

10.1 – County has an Information-Sharing Plan

10.1.1 – Detail the county's program for data sharing

Data should be shared as widely and rapidly as possible once owning agencies have processed the information.⁴⁷ Counties should inventory the datasets, lists, and types of information that are commonly available and compare that information used in the EOC to validate common assumptions and identify discrepancies. This applies to but is not limited to, maps/GIS data and shelter lists.²⁶

Establish a local authoritative source for data specific to home damage and classifications to address differences in the damage assessment processes and classifications between the county, CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and FEMA.¹¹

It is recommended that local emergency dispatch centers in coordination with local utility companies develop and implement an automated system and/or process to transfer calls reporting power outages directly to the appropriate utility company.¹⁵ This could reduce the stress on the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and improve situational awareness.

ArcGIS is the preferred repository for sharing and accessing GIS content for Cal OES. Information on EOC Software can be found in [Section 11.1.3](#) of this document.

10.2 – Land Mobile Radio communications

The 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake highlighted the need to purchase a radio system that allows all response departments to communicate directly with each other.²⁷ Communications methods and responsibilities during incident responses among federal, state, and local agencies should be determined before emergencies and reviewed regularly.¹⁶

Only one tactical frequency was used during the 2020 Safe LA Civil Unrest incident, although there were multiple protest groups spread throughout the downtown area. This proved to be problematic, as too many officers tried to use the same frequency simultaneously. Counties need to ensure that it has sufficient tactical encrypted frequencies and that the UCP uses them.³³ Pre-identify radio frequencies for communications amongst all mutual aid partners and record them on an ICS-205 Communications form. This could further identify gaps and strategies for communication redundancies.¹

Relatedly, when using the radio, Command Staff and assigned personnel need to know and use their proper and full designations so the Unified Commanders and others at the UCP can most efficiently track resources and personnel.³³

10.2.1 – Detail the county’s methods for interoperable communications in areas without reliable signal

It is a California best practice for counties to determine limitations and best practices for communication and warning methodologies during power disruption scenarios. Identify communities that are challenged with cellular services, such as rural communities.¹⁸

The Sonoma Department of Emergency Management suggests outreach to the lodging industry to invest in tone-coded squelch radio receivers or encourage the use of NOAA Weather Radios.²⁶

During the 2012 Chips Ponderosa Fires, experts agreed there is a need to reduce or eliminate communication failures in remote areas of the State, increased use of alternative methods of communication that do not rely on a weak or interruptible signal, such as satellite phones, could be considered.²²

The UCP and EOC should establish regular and formal communications and follow proper demobilization protocols.³²

10.2.2 – Detail the county’s program for communications training

Each agency should have staff with operational and technical knowledge of its communications systems to predict potential communications outages before they occur.¹⁶ As a result of the 1991 East Bay Hills Fire, experts recommended that counties conduct frequent interagency radio communications exercises. All fire departments in an area should participate.¹³

10.3 – Amateur radio communications

It is a California best practice for counties to improve public emergency training using all available communications devices and technologies (survey discovered ham radio operators were important during wildfires).⁷

10.3.1 – Detail the county’s program for amateur radio communications

It is recommended that every county develop and implement a plan for the use of radio amateurs. The system should provide for self-activated, automatic response coverage at all major points in the community, complete system redundancy, adequate training in the emergency role, and acceptance and integration into the emergency organization structure.⁴⁸

Amateur “ham” radio operators have proved valuable in many disasters. In many cases, amateur radio communications are the first system in operation after a disaster, and often the most extensive system utilized.⁴⁸

Many ham radio operators meet regularly via radio on a net to check in using their FCC-licensed call sign. These experienced communications individuals may also be members of organized groups such as Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS), Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL), Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), or Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES). These groups can exponentially increase situational awareness during an incident.

Specific examples of amateur radio training include ARRL's ham radio training [MCARCS](#) or [MendoRadio](#).⁷

10.3.2 – Detail region’s program for amateur radio communications

It is further recommended that each regional office of emergency services develop an amateur radio capability, including radio equipment, antenna, stand-by volunteer organization, training, and recognition. If the regions are to have a true amateur radio capability, then their organization must also be self-activating and must provide for complete system redundancy.⁴⁸

10.3.3 – Detail the community’s program for amateur radio communications

Communities might benefit from gaining access to other communications systems as well. Residents of Mount Ida in Butte County are forming their own communications network. They paid for and installed their own General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) communications repeater and hold weekly nets. Once the county sends out an alert, the community radio operators immediately re-broadcast to other radio users.

10.4 – County identifies how to integrate emerging technologies into response operations

Identify an EOC technology working group to address technology and communication issues in the EOC.¹⁴ Consider investing in the capability to conduct drone flights and capture aerial footage. Maintain relations with the private company tasked with mapping. Formalize the recommendation of providing drone footage following major disasters for resident peace of mind and insurance substantiation.¹

Counties should establish a routine testing schedule for aerial unit downlinks. Downlink systems that are not working properly should be fixed and retested to ensure an adequate number are operational and able to send live video downlinks to multiple receivers. Additionally, a commanding officer in an air unit can complement the downlink deployment and provide guidance and

information to Operations Section Chief and Unified Commanders.³³ The IAEM Emerging Technology Committee has a white paper on baseline technology needs and expectations of an EOC. The white paper can be found here: www.iaem.org

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Best Practice Examples for Situational Assessment

11.1 – Situational Assessment Program

Following the 1991 East Bay Hills Fire, experts agreed that there was a need to plan for early information/intelligence gathering and develop procedures for sharing critical information with the EOC and external stakeholders.¹³ Counties should develop a communications plan to provide accurate, timely, and verified situational awareness to elected officials, through the EOC. The plan should also include a mechanism for elected officials to communicate any critical information they gather from the community and integrate it into the common operating picture.²⁶

FEMA developed the following community lifelines a suggested target for expedited information/intelligence gathering immediately after impact:

- Safety and Security
- Food, Water, and Shelter
- Health and Medical
- Energy (Power & Fuel)
- Communications
- Transportation
- Hazardous Materials

Additional information on Community Lifelines can be found at FEMA's website: [FEMA Community Lifelines](#)

11.1.1 – Detail the county's use of plain language in response operations

At the county level, situational awareness is significantly improved with robust information sharing between counties, allowing first responders to better support overall emergency response efforts.¹⁵

Use of common language and clear text should be applied to all responders and partnering agencies. This is necessary due to the multiple types of disciplines responding to the incident. Use of terms such as “victims”, “patients”, “witnesses”, and “casualties” have different meanings to law enforcement, fire responders, hospital staff, and others. Inconsistent use of these terms can be confusing and lead to duplication of effort, delays in response, or other impediments to an organized operation.³⁷

Abbreviations and acronyms should be limited however, it is a California best practice to spell them out the first time they are used in an emergency plan. Additionally, plans should include an abbreviation and acronym glossary as an attachment to the plan.

11.1.2 – Detail the county’s use of conference calls for situational awareness

Counties should develop communications protocols, such as how to effectively use conference calls and instant messaging, to facilitate intelligence sharing and interagency coordination.¹⁶ During the 2010 Barstow Contaminated Drinking Water incident, twice-daily conference calls were held between the county, City of Barstow, Golden State Water Company, California Department of Public Health, and Cal OES.⁸

When a supporting EOC is scheduling conference calls involving another EOC, the planning section for each EOC must coordinate with each other to avoid scheduling conflicts. Furthermore, the supporting EOC should make every effort to accommodate the EOC being supported for any kind of schedule, including but limited to deadlines for situation reports, conference calls, information meetings, etc.²² Counties can conduct conference calls with all levels of SEMS and continually updating weather forecasts, to allow jurisdictions to better anticipate resource needs.⁴¹

Counties should also schedule regular information exchanges among all operational level fire and police personnel from all jurisdictions in a mutual threat zone. This could be used to discuss local procedures, authority, and automatic mutual aid agreements.¹³ During the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, regular meetings kept non-governmental organizations informed which effectively distributed updated information related to clean-up and emergency response efforts.²³

11.1.3 – Detail the EOC’s integration of situational awareness software programs

Counties must continue to try and harness technology while maintaining redundant systems if or when technology failures occur.³³

For one county, the use of EOC software increased communication efficiency over the standard paper procedures staff used in the past. EOC staff found it much easier to send updated information to the SOC through EOC software.²⁸

The use of EOC software systems can significantly improve information flow at all SEMS levels.²² s should consider using a software application to support situational awareness and information updates through shared documentation between the EOC and UCP.³² Systems should include all agencies and organizational structures in the EOC for situational awareness, resource requests, and incident documentation.²⁴

Information shared via email was not always available to the right people at the right time during the 2017 Orange County Water Interruption because of shift work and emails going from person to person instead of being targeted to those who needed to be kept informed.²⁴

11.2 – Detail the County’s integration of Emergency Operations Center Action Plans into response operations

The Emergency Operations Center Action Plan (EAP) identifies incident objectives and provides essential information regarding the incident organization, resource allocation, work assignments, safety, and weather. A well-conceived, complete EAP facilitates successful incident operations and provides a basis for evaluating performance in achieving incident objectives.

Ensure all incident-related activities and services are included in the EAP.¹⁷ Incorporate robust recovery objectives in the EAP early in the response and plan for transition to recovery to include the transfer of UCP as needed.²¹²

Fast-moving incidents may require an EAP for both the day and night operational periods. “These EAPs proved to be the only written planning documents created and shared with all participating agencies.”⁴⁶

Glenn County professionals suggested that [EAPs] are also useful tools for incident documentation of response activities. They suggested counties train and implement both action plans and Situation Reports². Additional information on EAPs can be found in [FEMA’s Incident Action Planning Guide](#).

Additional information about IAPs/EAPs can be found here: [FEMA Incident Action Planning Guide](#)

11.3 – Detail the County’s integration of Situation Reports into response operations

A situation report is a form of status report which provides decision-makers and readers a quick understanding of the current situation. Starting with the ICS 202 form (or another format), the situation report should provide a clear and concise understanding of the situation. The plain language situation report should be factual while also providing meaning or context. The situation report created during the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill Incident addressed essential elements of information that can be used for other oil spill incidents.²³

Situation reports can also serve as a form of documentation for an incident. San Mateo County submitted numerous detailed situation reports which contributed to providing real-time awareness of a rapidly changing incident to all local, regional, and State stakeholders during the San Bruno Explosion of 2010.⁴⁰

11.4 – County’s emergency plan includes Geographic Information Systems

According to a post-disaster report, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) provided an invaluable tool for maintaining, displaying, and analyzing disaster data generated during several incidents, including the Northridge earthquake in 1994.⁴⁹

11.4.1 – Detail the county’s GIS data sharing program

Consider developing an inventory and associated GIS map of cultural assets to ensure the protection of those assets during response and recovery operations.¹¹

Ranked preferences for GIS Data Sharing Standards

- 1) ArcGIS Online Web Services
- 2) Open-Source GIS Web Services
- 3) File Geodatabase
- 4) Shapefile
- 5) KML/KMZ

It is recommended that counties organize GIS data by disaster type, to facilitate easy access during an emergency: Cal OES GIS Data Hub ([CA Governor's Office of Emergency Services Public Data Hub \(arcgis.com\)](#))

Counties should work with key stakeholders to establish a system to collect and coordinate existing local, state, and federal GIS resources. Counties should establish a methodology to overlay hazard information on current topographic, demographic, facilities, and other information. GIS analysts need to develop protocols and linkages among different levels of government.¹⁶

GIS is most effective when activated immediately following a disaster. This requires developing or importing existing data sets for each region, establishing data standards and formats that can be used by all agencies participating in the disaster response and recovery process, and ensuring that technical staff required to operate the system are identified and trained statewide.”⁴⁹

Continue efforts of the county-wide GIS working group to coordinate databases and improve the overall quality of GIS maps.¹¹For example, during the 2012 Chips Ponderosa Fires, a utility provided the UCP with detailed mapping of gas and power line locations within the fire threatened areas. The utility worked directly with the UCP, demonstrating the importance of public-private coordination down to the field level.²²

Establish protocols for the consistent and effective sharing of incident information, geographic data, and projections of expected incident activity

(including potential areas of evacuation) between the UCP and the county. Evaluate the use of a county-wide “GIS Cooperative” or “Joint Geospatial Information System” model to coordinate and share data and resources (Sacramento County GIS Cooperative is an example). For major fire incidents, consider incorporating local GIS into the UCP to support mapping and alert and warning.²⁶

11.4.2 – GIS for inclusion

Community members in San Francisco indicated it would be helpful to map each NGO’s targeted community engagement areas to identify potential gaps in services. Sonoma County community members participated in “Map Your Neighborhood” programs and indicated that they can be effective.

GIS can also be used to expand cultural competence and inclusion. Following the 1998 floods, experts agreed that GIS could be used to provide demographic information.⁵⁰

11.4.3 – Detail the county’s use of GIS in the EOC

Ensure procedures within the EOC are streamlined and enforced to support requests for GIS maps, including the use of ICS forms to process requests (e.g., ICS Form 213). Continue efforts to pre-identify and prepare commonly requested GIS maps for use within the EOC.¹¹

Provide a means by which local emergency management professionals can look up relevant response information without having to wait for standard reporting cycles.¹⁰

11.4.4 – Detail the county’s use of GIS in the field

During the 2017 winter storms, the Yolo Operational Area Office of Emergency Services was able to test GIS tools in the field which has led to an aggressive GIS initiative to better assess the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure and facilities throughout the Yolo County.¹⁰

Develop tools and methods to facilitate tactical planning, track the progress of operations, and share situational awareness to strengthen coordination among those involved.¹²

11.4.5 – Detail the county’s use of GIS for evacuation

South Carolina created a Know Your Zone campaign with a website to assist individuals in identifying their evacuation map zones. Additional information can be found at www.hurricane.sc/know-your-zone

The Home Page of El Dorado County's website (www.edcgov.us) has a GIS map of open/closed roads. During a disaster, this map is scaled up to include areas that are under evacuation and which shelter sites are open, in real-time.

Coordinate with the PIO to confirm workflows for review, approval, and release of GIS products to support emergency public information and warning.¹¹ Work with cities to integrate the new road closure template used by the county into their GIS environments. Develop GIS accounts for the Google and Waze community portals to make real-time adjustments to published maps. Know that publishing alerts on Nixle will also provide real-time information to Google and Ring services.¹⁰

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Attachment A – Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms

AAR	After Action Reports
ACS	Auxiliary Communications Service
AFN	Access and Functional Needs
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Services
ARRL	Amateur Radio Relay League
ASL	American Sign Language
Cal OES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CBO	Community-Based organizations
CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CEMP	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CIKR	Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management
COG	Continuity of Government
COOP	Continuity of Operations
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease Identification 19 (2019 novel coronavirus)
CPG	Comprehensive Preparedness Guide
CUEA	California Utilities Emergency Association
CVMA	California Veterinary Medical Association
DRI	Disaster Response Interpreter
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DSW	Disaster Service Worker
EAP	Emergency Operations Center Action Plans
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EMAP	Emergency Management Accreditation Program
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESA	Emergency Services Act
ESF	Emergency Support Function
EVC	Emergency Volunteer Centers
FAST	Functional Assessment Service Team
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GC	Government Code
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GMRS	General Mobile Radio Service
GSWC	Golden State Water Company

HIRA	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
HMP	Hazard Mitigation Plan
HVA	Hazard Vulnerability Analysis
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
LAC	Local Assistance Center
LDC	Local Disaster Council
MARAC	Mutual Aid Regional Advisory Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
PDA	Preliminary Damage Assessment
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PIO	Public Information Officers
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
REOC	Regional Emergency Operations Center
RSF	Recovery Support Function
SEMS	Standardized Emergency Management System
SOC	Standard of Cover Plan
THIRA	Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
UASI	Urban Area Security Initiative
UC	University of California
UC	Unified Command
UCP	Unified Command Post
VOAD	Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster
WCPG	Whole Community Planning Guidance

Attachment B – Authorities and References

State Laws

- AB 477 (Cervantes) Vulnerable Populations
- AB 2311 (Brown) Access and Functional Needs
- AB 2968 (Rodriguez) Best practices for county emergency plans
- AB 2386 (Bigelow) Cal OES review of local emergency plans
- SB 160 (Jackson) Cultural Competence

Federal Guidance

- National Preparedness Goal, Second Edition September 2015 [FEMA National Preparedness Goal](#)
- FEMA Website [FEMA Mission Core Capabilities](#)
- National Response Framework, Fourth Edition, October 28, 2019 [FEMA National Preparedness Frameworks](#)

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After Action Reports (AAR) Reviewed and References Cited

Best practices, lessons learned, recommendations, and corrective actions were reviewed in each of the following AARs as reference for Best Practices for County Emergency Plans:

¹AAR: Butte County Camp Fire AAR, 2018

²AAR: Alaskan Earthquake, 1964

³AAR: San Simeon Earthquake, 2003

⁴AAR: Baja Earthquake, 2012

⁵Reference: [Legal Dictionary/Senior Citizens](#)

⁶Reference: ["Older Americans Act" National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare](#)

⁷AAR: Northern California Firestorm – Telecommunications Outage Report, 2017

⁸AAR: Barstow Contaminated Drinking Water, 2010

⁹AAR: California Drought, 2014

¹⁰AAR: Yolo County Winter Storms AAR, 2017

¹¹AAR: Santa Barbara County Thomas Fire AAR, 2017

¹²AAR: LAX Shooting Report, 2013

¹³AAR: East Bay Hills Fire, 1991

¹⁴AAR: Ventura County Thomas Fire AAR, 2017

¹⁵AAR: Severe March Storms, 2011

¹⁶AAR: Southern California Fires, 2003

¹⁷AAR: Orange County Santiago Fire AAR, 2007

¹⁸AAR: Sonoma County PSPS, 2019

¹⁹AAR: Hurricane Hugo, 1989

²⁰AAR: Oroville Spillway Incident (February), 2017

²¹AAR: Aliso Canyon Gas Leak, 2015

²²AAR: Chips Ponderosa Fires, 2012

²³AAR: Refugio Oil Spill, 2015

²⁴AAR: Orange County Water Interruption ARR, 2017

²⁵AAR: Statewide December Storms, 2014

²⁶AAR: Kincaid Fire AAR, 2019

²⁷AAR: Loma Prieta Earthquake, 1989

²⁸AAR: Fire Season, 2014

²⁹AAR: Lessons Learned from the California 2020 Wildfire Season, 2020

³⁰AAR: Southern California Fires, 2008

³¹AAR: Southern California Fires, 2007

³²AAR: LA World Airport Power Outage AAR, 2019

³³AAR: Safe LA Civil Unrest AAR, 2020

³⁴AAR: Humboldt Earthquake (January), 2010

³⁵AAR: Los Angeles Wildfires, 2009

³⁶AAR: Upper Jones Tract Flood, 2004

³⁷AAR: City of Santa Monica Shooting AAR, 2013

³⁸AAR: Mid-Year California Fires, 2008

³⁹AAR: Cosco Busan San Francisco Bay Area Oil Spill, 2009

⁴⁰AAR: San Bruno Explosion, 2010

⁴¹AAR: Statewide Winter Storms (January), 2010

⁴²AAR: Napa Earthquake, 2014

⁴³AAR: Fire Season, 2013

⁴⁴AAR: December Floods, 1996

⁴⁵Reference: [Cal OES A Guide for Establishing a Local Assistance Center Assistance Center](#)

⁴⁶AAR: Alaska Airlines Crash, 2000

⁴⁷AAR: Golden Guardian Exercise, 2005

⁴⁸AAR: Halls Valley – Morgan Hill Earthquake, 1984

⁴⁹AAR: Northridge Earthquake, 1994

⁵⁰AAR: Floods, 1998

Whole Community Meetings

Listos CA, in conjunction with Cal OES, facilitated the following twenty-three, two (2)-hour community meetings between October and December 2020, to identify best practices for county emergency plans:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>
10/07/20	Lake County	11/16/20	Mendocino County
10/08/20	Solano County	11/18/20	Fresno County
10/22/20	San Diego County	11/24/20	Monterey County
10/23/20	San Francisco County	12/02/20	Santa Cruz County
10/26/20	Siskiyou County	12/03/20	Napa County
10/30/20	Alameda County	12/08/20	Butte County
11/02/20	Shasta County	12/09/20	Trinity County
11/02/20	Nevada County	12/11/20	Madera County
11/04/20	San Bernardino County	12/15/20	El Dorado County
11/05/20	Tulare County	12/16/20	Glenn County
11/06/20	Sonoma County	12/18/20	Tehama County
11/13/20	Riverside County		

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Attachment C – List of Hazards/Threats

There is no one single way of identifying hazards/threats which may impact a community; however, the following illustrates basic hazards/threats listed in various emergency management standards.

Hazards/Threats counties should consider planning for:

- Active Assailant (Active Shooter, Active Intruder, Vehicular Attack)
- Air Quality Emergency (Wildfire Smoke, Toxic Plume)
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Attack
- CBRNE – Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear, and Explosive
- Civil Disturbance/Civil Unrest
- Conflagration
- Cyber Attack
- Dam/Levee Failure
- Debris Flow
- Drought/Water Shortage
- Earthquake
- Extreme Temperatures (Heat and Cold)
- Flood (Riverine Flood, Flash Flood, Seiche, Tidal Surge, Ice Jam, Log Jam)
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Infectious Disease (Pandemic, Epidemic, and Communicable Diseases)
- Invasive Species
- Land Movement (Landslide, Liquefaction, Mudslide, Subsidence)
- Space Weather (Geomagnetic storm and Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP))
- Transportation Accidents (Water, Air, Rail, Road)
- Tsunami
- Utility Interruption (Telephone/Wireless, Natural Gas, Electric, and Internet)
- Visibility Interruption (Smoke, Fog, Ash, Temperature Inversion)
- Volcano
- Wildland Fire
- Windstorm (Tropical Cyclone, Hurricane, Tornado, Waterspout, Dust storm, Sandstorm)
- Winter Storm (Snow, Ice, Hail, Sleet, Avalanche, Arctic Freeze)

Other (Operational/Functional) scenarios to consider planning for:

- Communications Outage Plan (cellular, internet)
- Damage Assessment Plan
- Electric Power Disruption Plan
- Evacuation & Re-Entry Plan
- Feeding of Mass Populations Plan
- Fueling/Re-Fueling Plan
- Line of Duty Death (LODD)/Untimely Employee Death Plan

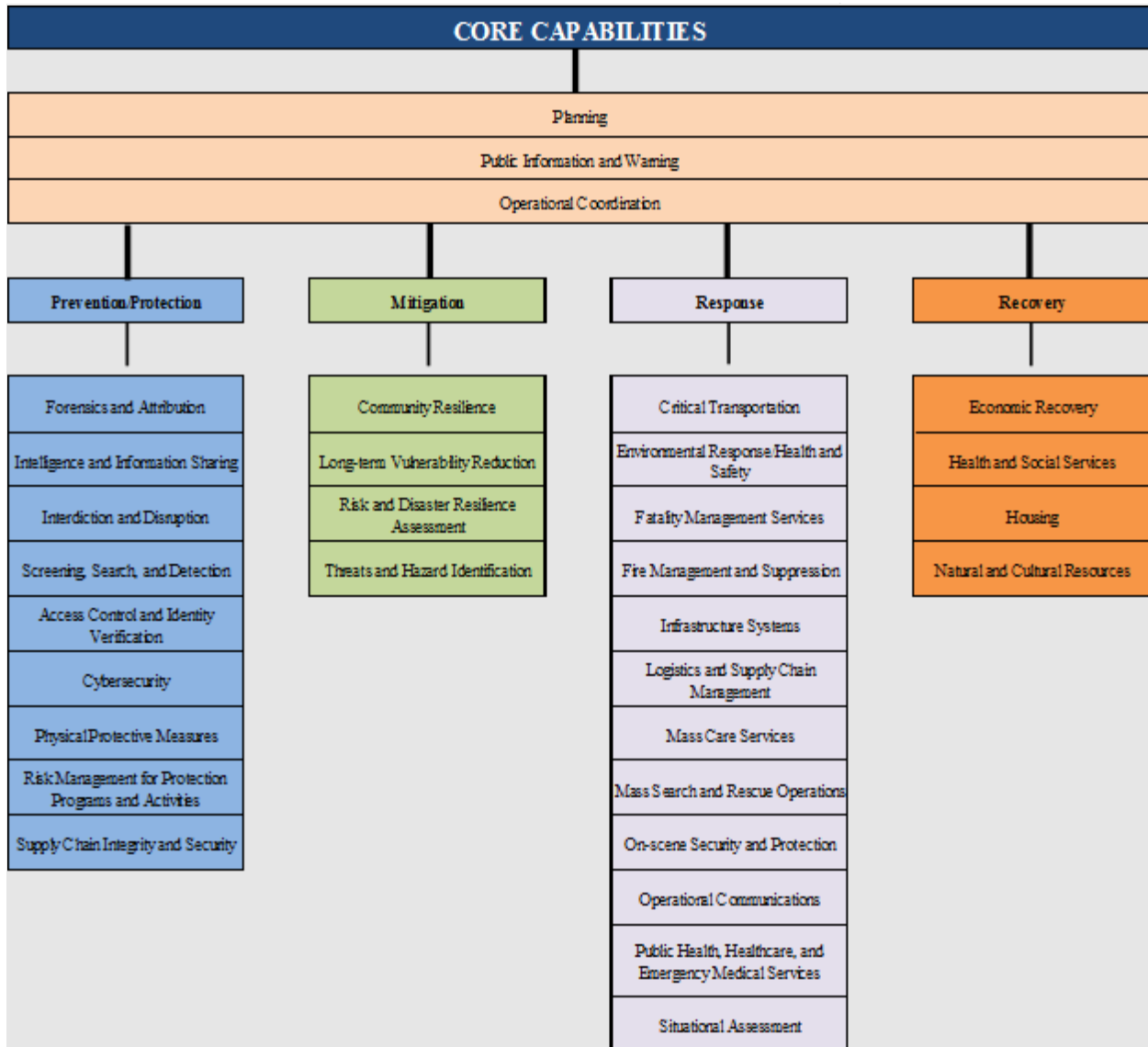
- Local Assistance Center (LAC) Plan
- Mass Care and Shelter (Human & Animal) Plan
- Mass Casualty Incident/Surge Plan
- Mass Fatality (Human & Animal) Plan
- Mutual Aid Plan (EMS, Fire, Law, OES, Public Health, etc.)
- Points of Dispensing (PODs) Plan
- Public Alert & Warning System (PAWS) Plan
- Search & Rescue
- Volunteer & Donations Management Plan

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Attachment D – Explanation of Core Capabilities

Core Capabilities

FEMA has identified 32 Core Capabilities that every community should seek to build as a foundation for their emergency management program. Core Capabilities should be considered when creating/revising/updating an EOP.



Mission Areas

Each Core Capability falls under one or more “mission areas.” Ensuring resilience in a community requires effective preparation and planning for operations in all mission areas of a disaster.

SEMS lists the “Phases of Comprehensive Emergency Management” as

- Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

However, the [National Preparedness Goal](#) (Second Edition September 2015) update to NIMS removed Disaster Phases and instead, now calls them the five mission areas:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Mitigation
- Response
- Recovery

Preparedness is a concept that should be integrated into all five mission areas.

Best practices in this document are separated into the following core capabilities under the response mission area. They are defined as such:

Planning

Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or community-based approaches to meet defined objectives.

Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.

Public Information and Warning

Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community with clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.

Critical Transportation

Provide transportation (including infrastructure access and accessible transportation services) for response priority objectives, including the evacuation of people and animals, and the delivery of vital response personnel, equipment, and services into the affected areas.

Operational Coordination

Infrastructure Systems

Stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore and revitalize systems and services to support a viable, resilient community.

Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Deliver essential commodities, equipment, and services in support of impacted communities and survivors, including emergency power and fuel support, as well as the coordination of access to community staples. Synchronize logistics capabilities and enable the restoration of impacted supply chains.

Mass Care Services

Provide life-sustaining and human services to the affected population, including hydration, feeding, sheltering, temporary housing, evacuee support, reunification, and distribution of emergency supplies.

On-scene Security and Protection

Ensure a safe and secure environment through law enforcement and related security and protection operations for people and communities located within affected areas and for all traditional and atypical response personnel engaged in lifesaving and life-sustaining operations.

Operational Communications

Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of security, situational awareness, and operations by any means available, among and between affected

communities in the impact area and all response forces.

Situational Assessment

Provide all decision-makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of the hazard, any cascading effects, and the status of the response.

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Attachment E – Best Practices Planning Checklists

Best Practices Checklist for Planning

The following are California Best Practices for counties:

- 1.1 – County has a current, approved base emergency plan (i.e., Emergency Operations Plan)
- 1.2 – County emergency plan was created in collaboration with the whole community
 - 1.2.1 – Detail the integration of communities with Access and Functional Needs (AFN)
 - 1.2.2 – Detail the integration of communities' cultural competence
 - 1.2.3 – Detail the integration of communities with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities
 - 1.2.4 – Detail the integration of communities of older adults
 - 1.2.5 – Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged communities
 - 1.2.6 – Detail the integration of underserved populations
 - 1.2.7 – Detail the integration of unhoused communities
- 1.3 – County emergency plan is consistent with standard best practices
 - 1.3.1 – Demonstrate that the county's emergency plan is consistent with FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101
 - 1.3.2 – Demonstrate that the county's emergency plan is consistent with California best practices
 - 1.3.3 – Demonstrate that the county's emergency plan is consistent with industry standards and best practices
 - 1.3.4 – Demonstrate that the county's emergency plan is consistent with Cal OES Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Crosswalk
- 1.4 – County conducted a Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) and included results in the emergency plan
 - 1.4.1 – Identify Hazards/Threats which could potentially impact the county
 - 1.4.2 – Detail the county's highest estimated risks & impacts
- 1.5 – County identified how the emergency plan intersects horizontally with other emergency plans in the county
 - 1.5.1 – Detail intersection with General Plan
 - 1.5.2 – Detail intersection with Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - 1.5.3 – Detail intersection with Disaster Recovery Plan
 - 1.5.4 – Detail intersection with Cybersecurity Plan
- 1.6 – County identified roles & responsibilities of Advance Planning
- 1.7 – County identified the Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan for emergency management
 - 1.7.1 – Detail COOP roles & responsibilities
 - 1.7.2 – Detail program for continuity of Personnel

- 1.7.3 - Detail program for continuity of Facilities
- 1.7.4 – Detail program for testing, training, and exercising COOP plan
- 1.8 – County has a regular update cycle for the emergency plan
 - 1.8.1 – Detail the maintenance cycle for the county’s emergency plan
 - 1.8.2 – Detail the program for testing, training, and exercising the county’s emergency plan

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

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Best Practices Checklist for Public Information and Warning

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 2.1 – County has a current, approved public information plan
 - 2.1.1 – Detail the county's community communications and engagement strategy
 - 2.1.2 – Detail the county's Public Information Office (PIO) roles & responsibilities
 - 2.1.3 – Detail the county's use of a PIO Team, if applicable
 - 2.1.4 – Detail the county's Joint Information Center (JIC) roles & responsibilities
 - 2.1.5 – Detail the county's JIC location and pre-identified equipment needs
 - 2.1.6 – Detail the county's use of the Joint Information System (JIS), if applicable
- 2.2 – The county public information plan was created in collaboration with the whole community
 - 2.2.1 – Detail the county's collaboration with the Whole Community Planning Team (WCPT)
 - 2.2.2 – Detail county's workflow for providing accessible, two-way social media communications with the public
- 2.3 – County has a current, approved Alert and Warning plan
 - 2.3.1. – Demonstrate that plan is consistent with California Standard Statewide Evacuation Terminology
 - 2.3.2 – Detail the county's public notification systems
 - 2.3.3 – Detail the county's program for residents and visitors to sign up for emergency alerts
- 2.4 – County Alert and Warning plan was created in collaboration with the whole community
 - 2.4.1 – Detail the integration of communities with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) into the Alert and Warning plan
 - 2.4.2 – Detail the integration of communities' cultural competence into the Alert and Warning plan
 - 2.4.3 – Detail the integration of communities with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities
 - 2.4.4 – Detail the integration of communities with older adults
 - 2.4.5 – Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged communities
 - 2.4.6 – Detail the integration of underserved populations
 - 2.4.7 – Detail the integration of unhoused communities

- 2.5 – County pre-identified messages for the primary hazards/threats impacting the county
 - 2.5.1 – Identify pre-scripted messages for Animal-related disaster information

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

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Best Practices Checklist for Operational Coordination

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 3.1 – County identified EOC activation criteria
- 3.2 – County has a program to pre-identify EOC Staff
 - 3.2.1 – Detail the county's program for staffing the EOC
- 3.3 – County has a program for training personnel on SEMS/NIMS/ICS
 - 3.3.1 Detail training program for First Responders
 - 3.3.2 – Detail training program for UCP Staff
 - 3.3.3 – Detail training program for EOC Staff
 - 3.3.4 – Detail training program for EOC Sections Chief
 - 3.3.5 – Detail training program for county Agency Representatives
 - 3.3.6 – Executive Policy Group and Elected Officials
- 3.4 – County identifies interfaces with the county's EOC
 - 3.4.1 – Detail interface between the county's EOC and the Unified Command Post (UCP)
 - 3.4.2 – Detail interface between the county's EOC First Responders
 - 3.4.3 – Detail interface between the county's EOC and Special Districts
 - 3.4.4 – Detail interface between the county's EOC and Cities
 - 3.4.5 – Detail interface between county's EOC and Tribal Nations
 - 3.4.6 – Detail interface between county's EOC and the California National Guard (CNG)
- 3.5 – County has clearly defined minimum acceptable criteria for establishing a UCP
 - 3.5.1 – Pre-identify potential UCP locations
 - 3.5.2 – Pre-identify equipment and supplies needed to activate a UCP
 - 3.5.3 – Pre-identify UCP and representation
 - 3.5.4 – UCP Roles & Responsibilities
 - 3.5.5 – Detail the span of control during complex incidents
- 3.6 – County has clearly defined minimum acceptable criteria for establishing an EOC Facility
 - 3.6.1 – Identify the county's primary EOC location
 - 3.6.2 – Detail accessibility of the county's EOC
 - 3.6.3 – Detail the county's EOC backup power capabilities
 - 3.6.4 – County's alternate EOC location

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Best Practices Checklist for Critical Transportation

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- A county evacuation plan was created in collaboration with the whole community
 - Detail the integration of cultural competence into evacuation/transportation services
 - Detail the integration of Individuals with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities into evacuation/transportation services
 - Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged individuals into evacuation/transportation services
 - Detail the integration of underserved populations into evacuation/transportation services
 - Detail the integration of unhoused individuals into evacuation/transportation services
- 4.1 – County has a current, approved evacuation plan
 - 4.1.1 – Plan is consistent with Standard Statewide Evacuation Terminology
 - 4.1.2 – Plan includes Temporary Evacuation Points (TEPs)
 - 4.1.3 – Plan includes workflow showing pre-identified triggers for evacuation warning/order
 - 4.1.4 – Plan includes workflow showing pre-identified triggers for evacuation warning/order
- 4.2 – County has a current, approved re-entry/re-population plan
 - 4.2.1 – Plan includes workflow showing pre-identified triggers for re-entry/re-population
 - 4.2.2 – County re-entry/re-population plan was created in collaboration with the whole community

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Best Practices Checklist for Fatality Management

The following are California Best Practices for County:

- 5.1 – County has a current plan for fatality management
 - 5.1.1 – Detail program for remains recovery.

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#)

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Best Practices Checklist for Infrastructure Systems

The following are California Best Practices for County:

- 6.1 – County has a current response plan for critical facilities and infrastructure
- 6.2 – County has a current Damage Assessment plan
 - 6.2.1 – Identify the roles & responsibilities of damage assessment teams
 - 6.2.2 – Identify training for damage assessment teams

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#)

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Best Practices Checklist for Logistics and Supply Chain Management

The following are California Best Practices for County:

- 7.1 – County has a current resource request program
 - 7.1.1 – Detail the county's resource request program
 - 7.1.2 – Detail UCP resource request program
 - 7.1.3 – Detail city and special district resource request program
 - 7.1.4 – Detail out-of-county resource request program
 - 7.1.5 – Detail the private sector/NGO resource request program
 - 7.1.6 – Detail evacuation resources available to the county
- 7.2 – County has a current mutual aid plan
 - 7.2.1 – Detail the county's resource deployment program
 - 7.2.2 – Detail the county's resource arrival program
 - 7.2.3 – Detail the county's resource staging program
 - 7.2.4 – Detail the county's resource demobilization program
 - 7.2.5 – Detail county's resource scalability program
 - 7.2.6 – Detail the county's Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) program
 - 7.2.7 – Detail the county's Law Enforcement Mutual Aid (LEMA) program
- 7.3 – Resource management plan coordinates with Emergency Support Functions (ESFs)
 - 7.3.1 – Detail the role of an Agency Representative vs. ESF Coordinator
 - 7.3.2 – Detail the roles & responsibilities of each ESF Coordinator
 - 7.3.3 – Detail how the county ESFs integrate with state and federal ESFs
- 7.4 – County resource management program coordinates with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and private sector resources
- 7.5 – County has current plan volunteers and donations management plan
 - 7.5.1 – Detail the county's volunteer engagement program
 - 7.5.2 – Detail the county's Just-in-Time (JIT) Volunteer program
 - 7.5.3 – Detail the county's public information strategy about acceptable donations
 - 7.5.4 – Detail the county's program for handling physical donations
 - 7.5.5 – Detail the county's program for handling financial donations
 - 7.5.6 – Detail the county's volunteer and donations management tool
- 7.6 – Commodities Points of Distribution/Dispensing (PODs)
 - 7.6.1 – Detail POD roles and responsibilities
 - 7.6.2 – Pre-identified locations which could potentially be used as a POD

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Best Practices Checklist for Mass Care Services

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 8.1 – County has a current shelter plan
 - 8.1.1 – Detail the county's mass care and shelter roles and responsibilities
 - 8.1.2 – Detail the county's training program for shelter staff
- 8.2 – County shelter plan was created in collaboration with the whole community
 - 8.2.1 – Detail the integration of cultural competence into mass care services
 - 8.2.2 – Detail the integration of Individuals with intellectual, cognitive, and physical disabilities into mass care services
 - 8.2.3 – Detail the integration of transportation disadvantaged individuals into mass care services
 - 8.2.4 – Detail the integration of underserved populations into mass care services
 - 8.2.5 – Detail the integration of unhoused individuals into mass care services
- 8.3 – County shelter plan includes pets and large animals (i.e., domestic and livestock)
- 8.4 – County plan details the Local Assistance Center (LAC) program
 - 8.4.1 – Identify the county's roles and responsibilities for a LAC
 - 8.4.2 – Detail the county's pre-identified LAC locations
 - 8.4.3 – Detail the county's program for re-unification

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Best Practice Examples Public Health, Healthcare, and Emergency Medical Services

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 9.1 – County identified mental health support for emergency responders and frontline personnel
 - 9.1.1 – Detail the county's programs for peer support
- 9.2 – County identified mental health support for disaster survivors

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

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Best Practices Checklist for Operational Communications

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 10.1 – County has an information-sharing plan
 - 10.1.1 – Detail the county's program for data sharing
- 10.2 – Land Mobile Radio (LMR) communications
 - 10.2.1 – Detail the county's methods for interoperable communications in areas without reliable signal (i.e., rural areas) (as appropriate)
 - 10.2.2 – Detail the county's program for communications training
- 10.3 – Amateur radio communications
 - 10.3.1 – Detail the county's program for amateur radio communications
 - 10.3.2 – Detail region's program for amateur radio communications
 - 10.3.3 – Detail the community's program for amateur radio communications
- 10.4 – County identifies how to integrate emerging technologies into response operations

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Best Practices Checklist for Situational Assessment

The following are California Best Practices for the county:

- 11.1 – Situational Assessment program
 - 11.1.1 – Detail the county's use of plain language in response operations
 - 11.1.2 – Detail the county's use of conference calls for situational awareness
 - 11.1.3 – Detail the EOC's integration of situational awareness software programs
- 11.2 – Detail the county's integration of Incident Action Plans (EAPs) into response operations
- 11.3 – Detail the county's integration of situation reports into response operations
- 11.4 – County's emergency plan includes Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
 - 11.4.1 – Detail the county's GIS data sharing program
 - 11.4.2 – GIS for inclusion
 - 11.4.3 – Detail the county's use of GIS in the EOC
 - 11.4.4 – Detail the county's use of GIS in the field
 - 11.4.5 – Detail the county's use of GIS for evacuation

Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms can be found in [Attachment A](#).

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Attachment F - List of California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) Courses – By Capability

Planning:

G235 Emergency Planning, G626 EOC Action Planning, Emergency Management Concepts, G205 Recovery from Disasters, G358- Evac and Re-Entry, G288/489 Volunteer and Donations Management

Public Information and Warning:

G290 Basic PIO, G291 Joint Information System, Intermediate PIO, L0105 PIO Basics, L0388 Advanced PIO, MR-Media Relations

Operational Coordination:

Emergency Management Concepts, G191 ICS/EOC Interface, G775 EOC Management, G626 EOC Action Planning, G611 Series, EOC Section Intermediate Series

Critical Transportation:

G611 Operations, EOC Section Intermediate: Operations, G557 Rapid Needs Assessment, Emergency Management Concepts, G191 ICS/EOC Interface, G775 EOC Management, G626 EOC Action Planning, Evacuation, and Re-entry Planning Course G358

Infrastructure Systems:

G611 Operations, EOC Section Intermediate: Operations, G557 Rapid Needs Assessment, Emergency Management Concepts, G191 ICS/EOC Interface, G775 EOC Management, G626 EOC Action Planning, AWR 213 Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Awareness, L0550 Continuity of Operations Planning, L0557 Mission Essential Functions Workshop – Continuity Guidance, MGT 315 Critical Asset Risk Management, MGT 414 Advanced Critical Infrastructure Protection Course

Logistics and Supply Chain Management:

G611 Logistics, EOC Section Intermediate: Logistics, G557 Rapid Needs Assessment, G191 ICS/EOC Interface, G775 EOC Management, G626 EOC Action Planning, L0675 Basic Interagency Logistics, L0660 Federal Staging Area

Mass Care Services:

G418 Mass Care Emergency Assistance

Operational Communications:

G290 Basic PIO, G291 Joint Information System, Intermediate PIO, L0105 PIO Basics, L0388 Advanced PIO, MR-Media Relations

Situational Assessment:

G557 Rapid Assessment, G191 ICS/EOC Interface, G775 EOC Management, G626 EOC Action Planning

- Please visit California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) for more information: [Train CSTI](#)