



City of Anaheim
ANAHEIM FIRE & RESCUE



August 22, 2019

The Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura
Presiding Judge, Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: RESPONSE to 2018-2019 Orange County Grand Jury Report,
"Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

Honorable Judge Nakamura:

As the Fire Chief of the City of Anaheim, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the City to the 2018-2019 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go." We take very seriously the role that local government has in the protection of life and property for the residents and visitors we serve in the City and surrounding area. The city values the opportunity to respond to the report and share our perspective on emergency public information in our county, and to provide a response to each of the issues outlined by the Grand Jury in their report. The responses contained in this letter were approved by the Anaheim City Council during regular session on September 10, 2019. The City's responses address the Orange County Grand Jury Report's findings and recommendations relevant to the report and are in accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933.05 (a) and (b).

If the city of Anaheim can provide additional information, or clarification of our response, please don't hesitate to call me.

FINDINGS

Finding F1: *Lack of coordination among the involved agencies caused Emergency Public Information sent out about evacuations during the Canyon 2 fire to be inconsistent, and confused residents.*

Response: The City of Anaheim partially disagrees with this finding. Given the fact that this was a rapidly evolving and escalating incident involving multiple jurisdictions, coordination and communication is always going to be a challenge. However, the City of Anaheim worked hand in hand with OCFA's PIO. While Anaheim was the main source of information, OCFA maintained communication throughout the incident. A communication plan was established between the Anaheim Fire & Rescue PIO and the OCFA PIO.

Finding F2: *Some emergency management personnel, tasked with creating and disseminating Emergency Public Information, in a rapidly-evolving, multijurisdictional emergency did not fully understand their roles and responsibilities.*

Response: The City of Anaheim partially disagrees with this finding. The City of Anaheim recognizes that training and exercise, to understand roles and responsibilities, is a key element to preparedness. AF&R's lead PIO is qualified by FEMA and Cal OES to serve as a Type-3 All-Hazard PIO on large scale incidents nationwide. Since that period, his qualifications have elevated to a Type-1 Trainee assigned to a Federal Type 1 Incident Management Team. Also, personnel assigned to support this function were fully engaged and understood the direction and responsibilities given. However, formal certification and multi-jurisdictional training has been identified for all levels, including support roles.

Finding F3: *No training standards for Public Information Officers exist and there are no formal written protocols for issuance of mass notification, including required training on the use of mass notification systems.*

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding in that there are no common defined training standards prescribed by CalOES or FEMA for Public Information Officers. Anaheim's lead PIO for this incident will complete the FEMA Master PIO program on 9/20/19 and will be one of four graduates of the program from California who will be the only active public safety PIO in California to complete this program. As part of this course, his final thesis discusses the need for national standards and training requirements for PIOs. Therefore, the City of Anaheim is taking the initiative towards ensuring all City of Anaheim personnel working in the capacity of public information are trained to the same minimum standards established by our agency. Anaheim Police Department does have a formal written document describing the protocol for utilizing the City's mass notification tool Anaheim Alert.

Finding F5: *The lack of a standardized written protocol for Alerts and Warnings decreases the ability of the County and its Operational Area jurisdictions to speak with one voice when it comes to alerting the public during emergencies.*

Response: The City of Anaheim partially disagrees with this statement. Within the Anaheim Emergency Operations Plan, roles, responsibilities, and activation procedures for the Joint Information System are described and outlined for staff working in the capacity of Public Information Officers. However, while every incident is different, the City of Anaheim will work towards developing a standardized written Alert and Warning Annex following the state and federal guidelines. Anaheim recognizes that while speaking in one voice is ideal, it is not always reflective of each jurisdictional voice and therefore encourages each jurisdictional

voice be developed and heard during rapidly evolving incidents such as these, with a high level of coordination among different agencies.

Finding F9: *The County and interviewed cities do not seek sufficient public feedback of the perceptions of effectiveness of the Emergency Public Information.*

Response: The City of Anaheim disagrees with this finding. Following the Canyon Fire 2 incident, several community meetings were held in east Anaheim to gather feedback and take in public comment. While more methods of public feedback can be explored, the City of Anaheim feels it did take in significant public feedback to address issues of concern following the fire.

Finding F10: *The lack of standardized emergency management terminology among the various jurisdictions within Orange County causes delays and confusion in the dissemination of Emergency Public Information.*

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding and will work internally and externally to develop common terminology applicable countywide and consistent with ICS/SEMS.

Finding F11: *Orange County jurisdictions and the California Highway Patrol lack a joint plan for evacuation routes, thus evacuations can be chaotic, creating increased potential for danger to residents.*

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. However, since this incident, Anaheim Police Department has coordinated with California Highway Patrol in developing an evacuation plan of east Anaheim. Additionally, this plan was developed in coordination with Anaheim Fire & Rescue, Anaheim Public Works, local school districts, the City of Orange, OCFA, and OCSD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation R2: *By December 31, 2019, using the authority derived from R1 (above), the Emergency Operations Center should establish specific minimum standards/expectations with regard to coordination and dissemination of Emergency Public Information that follow SEMS guidelines, by which committed cities must comply for multijurisdictional emergencies. (F1, F5, F10)*

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this recommendation and will work towards developing this after receiving guidelines from state and federal governments. As it is imperative for each jurisdiction to use ICS and SEMS, this can only be achieved once a common standard is adopted by state and federal governments. However, the City of Anaheim will maintain that all city staff working in this capacity be trained to annually in the use of Anaheim Alert.

Recommendation R3: *By September 30, 2019, the County Emergency Operations Center, the six cities interviewed by the Grand Jury and Orange County Fire Authority should adopt a standardized written protocol for issuance of mass notifications and require training on their software systems, whether the WEA service, AlertOC or any other system is utilized. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5)*

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented within one year of this letter. Currently, the City of Anaheim Police Department does have a written protocol to use the mass notification system "Anaheim Alert". However, this document will be examined, refreshed, and made applicable to all those working the public information capacity. Therefore, the City of Anaheim will work towards developing a formal Public Alert and Warning Plan which incorporates elements of protocols, training expectations, and procedures in issuance of mass notifications.

Recommendation R4: *By September 30, 2019, the six cities interviewed by the Grand Jury should pre-select facilities with sufficient technical capability and of various sizes that are readily accessible to all authorized personnel for use as potential Joint Information Centers so they can be activated in a timely manner. (F1)*

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented, but will work with the County and neighboring jurisdictions to arrive at a functional alternative. However, because of the magnitude, scale, dynamic, and logistics of moving an established public information office during a live incident, re-locating to a Joint Information Center can become problematic. City of Anaheim feels that while this recommendation conceptually sounds reasonable, Joint Information Centers should be established in a location where information can be exchanged freely between the impacted jurisdictions. Because impacted jurisdictions change from incident to incident, pre-selecting facilities to serve as Joint Information Centers that are "hot" or ready to use is not necessarily practical. The City of Anaheim will actively work with other agencies in this capacity if and when the time arises when and where appropriate given the circumstances of the incident.

Recommendation R7: *By September 30, 2019, The Orange County Sheriff's Department and each interviewed city's Emergency Management Division should adopt a proactive process by which residents impacted by an emergency can easily provide feedback regarding their experience with Emergency Public Information, such as by telephone, mail-in, and/or online surveys. (F9)*

Response: The recommendation has been implemented in the form of in-person community meetings post-incident. City of Anaheim will augment existing in-person community meetings with digital online surveys post-disaster to assist in after action review.

Recommendation R8: *By September 30, 2019, a task force, made up of representatives from all Operational Area jurisdictions, public safety Public Information Officers and state public safety professionals, such as California Highway Patrol, should be created to develop an emergency operations plan for large, wide-spread disasters. (F11)*

Response: The recommendation has been implemented and the City of Anaheim will continue to work with the Operational Area partners to develop this plan. As referenced before, Anaheim Police Department has collaborated with neighboring jurisdictional partners including California Highway Patrol to develop a coordinated evacuation plan for the east Anaheim region. Those involved in the planning process include Anaheim Police Department, California Highway Patrol, Anaheim Fire & Rescue, Anaheim Public Works, local school districts, the City of Orange, Orange County Fire Authority, and Orange County Sheriff Department. Several planning meetings were coordinated by Anaheim Police Department to bring together the various stakeholders in this plan for our region. This plan is also being communicated and advertised to residents of the area and is known to the public as the "Know Your Way" campaign, providing a visual map with predesignated directional flow of traffic in the event of mass evacuation. It has also been disclosed that every incident is dynamic and plans may change but to be prepared in any case for momentary notice of mandatory evacuations.

I would like to express my appreciation for the effort of the Orange County Grand Jury. The City is committed to providing a safe and peaceful environment for all who live, work, and play in Anaheim. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Anaheim Fire & Rescue Division Chief Alan Long, at (714) 765-4012 or along@anaheim.net.

Sincerely,



Patrick Russell
Fire Chief

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
City Manager, City of Anaheim
City Clerk, City of Anaheim