



## CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

2000 MAIN STREET, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA 92648-2702

OFFICE OF THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER  
DAVE KIFF

September 3, 2019

Honorable Kirk Nakamura  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**Re: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report - Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?**

Dear Judge Nakamura:

Enclosed are the City of Huntington Beach responses to the recommendations included in the Orange County Grand Jury Report *Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?*

If there are additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (714) 536-5575.

Respectfully,

Dave Kiff  
Interim City Manager

Enclosures

c: Michael Gates, City Attorney, City of Huntington Beach  
David A. Segura, Fire Chief, City of Huntington Beach

## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**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: Disagree wholly.** *The City of Huntington Beach was not involved in Canyon 2 Fire.*

**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: Disagree wholly.** *The City of Huntington Beach was not involved in Canyon 2 Fire.*

**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: Partial disagreement with finding.** *The City of Huntington Beach (City) has several-trained Public Information Officers (PIO). Each department has its own standards and training requirements specific to their field. These PIOs work together regularly to disseminate accurate and timely information to the public during emergencies and special events. In addition, the City was an active participant in the creation of the Operational Area (OA) Joint Information System (JIS) plan, and actively engages in regional collaboration.*

*In regards to the issuance of mass notifications, the City has written procedures for alerting and warning the public per its local Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Response Organization Guide and other Standard Operating Procedures. All personnel authorized to initiate Alert and Warning protocols are trained. Furthermore, the City participates in the annual AlertOC drill, which includes testing tsunami inundation zones and full city notifications. The city has been approved, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, for to send Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA). Once this capability is in place, the city will train key employees on its functions and use.*

**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: Partial disagreement with finding.** *Based on recent disasters in California, at the beginning of the year, the Operational Area (OA) convened an Alert and Warning planning committee, which the City participates on. Once this plan is complete, the City Emergency Management & Homeland Security Council and Local Emergency Planning Committee will begin working on an independent written annex to our Emergency Operations Plan that incorporates guidelines established in the OA plan. Once completed, the City will continue to follow guidelines set forth in our current standard operating procedures and plans.*

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

**Response: Agrees with finding.** *The City understands the importance of public feedback and promotes obtaining comments through the AlertOC Message Line and the My HB Mobile Application. It also actively engages the public through multiple social media outlets. To date, the City has not used the AlertOC*

*system for a major emergency, but the public has been able to provide feedback using these methods during testing periods.*

**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: Agrees with finding.** *This is a problem recognized throughout the state and nation. The City supports the use of common terminology and will work with the Operational Area, and our responders, to meet the objective.*

**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: Agrees with finding.** *The City supports the California Highway Patrol participation in the Orange County Emergency Management Organization (OCEMO) meetings/sub-committees and other regional collaborative organizations.*

**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: Recommendation is not reasonable.** *The OC Board of Supervisors is not responsible for establishing minimum standards/expectations for local jurisdictions. Emergency planning takes place at the local level and is a collaborative process done through regional groups such as OCEMO, and other discipline specific organizations. The City actively participates in these regional groups and understands that creating and implementing plans takes time. The City agrees that there is a pressing need to refine existing documents and procedures, but will not agree to this rigid timeline. However, the City will continue to participate in the OA Alert and Warning sub-committee and will then begin the process of creating and implementing an Alert and Warning Annex specific to the City.*

**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: Recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.** *While an Operational Area Plan is necessary to provide guidance and establish roles and responsibilities, each jurisdiction is unique and responsible for their own Alert and Warning plans and procedures. The City is currently prepared to alert and warn its residents, but will work to standardize policies and procedures with our OA partners. However, as stated in Recommendation 3, the process of collaborative planning cannot be rushed, and the City will not adhere to this rigid timeline.*

**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: Recommendation has been implemented.** *The City has several locations identified as local Joint Information Centers. These sites are co-located with our alternate Emergency Operation Centers, so that there is guaranteed communication between the two entities.*

**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: Recommendation has been implemented.** *The City currently has a message line for AlertOC and additional feedback can be provided through My HB mobile Application and other social media outlets.*

**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: Recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.** *Currently, there are written and approved an Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan and a Joint Information System Plan. In addition, the City has an Emergency Operations Plan that was reviewed by the California Office of Emergency Services and adopted by the city council. The City participates on multiple committees tasked with all aspects of emergency operations planning.*