



CITY OF YORBA LINDA

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

September 9, 2019

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

RE: Response of the City of Yorba Linda to Orange County Grand Jury 2018-19 Report, dated June 19th, 2019, titled "Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

Dear Judge Nakamura,

In accordance with Section 933.05(a) and (b) of the California Penal Code, the City of Yorba Linda submits the following response to the report, findings and recommendations of the 2018 – 19 Orange County Grand Jury report published June 19, 2019, entitled, "Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Per page 17 of the Grand Jury Report, the City of Yorba Linda is required to respond to Grand Jury Findings F1, F2, F3, F5, F9, F10, F11. Those responses are provided immediately below.

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

Response: **The City of Yorba Linda cannot agree or disagree with this finding.** The City of Yorba Linda was not directly impacted by the Canyon 2 Fire, therefore did not provide any Emergency Public Information to the public. The City maintained timely communication with representatives from the Orange County Fire Authority and the Orange County Sheriff's Department throughout the incident.

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 Yorba Linda disagrees with this finding.** The City of Yorba Linda did not transmit any Emergency Public Information regarding the Canyon 2 Fire or the Holy Fire. Early into the Canyon 2 Fire incident, key City staff reviewed roles and responsibilities if any information would be disseminated by the City. If the City of Yorba Linda had to inform residents of any evacuation or preventive measures, all actions would have been at the direction of the Unified Commanders and support the overall safety of the public.

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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 system.*

Response: **The City of Yorba Linda disagrees partially with this statement.** Even though there are no local training requirements for Public Information Officers, both FEMA and California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), provide courses and credentialing in the position of Public Information Officer. The City has identified several employees that are responsible for disseminating information during an incident. In September 2017, the City hired a full-time Communications Coordinator. This individual is responsible to monitor and provide pertinent timely information through numerous social platforms daily. If there was a need to provide safety information, the City can disseminate information not only through the mass notification system, but also through these social platforms. Also, these individuals routinely attend training not only on the use of the mass notification system, but also local seminars on the challenges of public information.

F5. *The lack of a standard written protocol for Alert and Warnings decreased the ability of the County and Operational Area jurisdiction to speak with one voice when it comes to alerting the public during emergencies.*

Response: **The City of Yorba Linda cannot agree or disagree with this finding.** The City of Yorba Linda was not directly impacted by the Canyon 2 Fire, therefore did not provide any Emergency Public Information to the public. The City has developed a draft Alert and Warning Guideline to provide guidance to City staff on the proper procedures and protocols in disseminating information to the public. The City will ensure this document will work in unison with Operational Area, State, and Federal guidelines. Once this document is finalized, key staff personnel will be briefed and trained on this document.

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

Response: **The City of Yorba Linda disagrees with this finding.** Because these two incidents (Canyon 2 Fire and Holy Fire) did not directly impact the City, information was not disseminated by the City. If the City had been involved or impacted, several community meetings and web-based questionnaires would have been available to obtain information from the public.

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 Yorba Linda agrees with this finding.** The City will continue to participate in any working groups established to mitigate and coordinate common terminology with public information. This item will also be addressed in the City's Alert and Warning Guideline under development.

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

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Response: **The City of Yorba Linda agrees with this finding.** Even though there is not a joint plan between the City and the California Highway Patrol, the City of Yorba Linda Police Services has communicated with adjoining cities to ensure each agencies evacuation plan do not conflict each other. Also, the City and our police service partners routinely attend meetings at the local, state, and federal level to ensure coordination of any plans on evacuation routes.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENTATIONS

Per page 18 of the Grand Jury Report, the City of Yorba Linda is required to respond to Grand Jury Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R7, R8. Those responses are provided immediately below.

R2. *By December 20, 2019, the Board of Supervisors, should establish minimum standards/expectations for individual cities who voluntarily participate in centralized Emergency Public Information planning activities in order to protect public safety during multijurisdictional emergencies. (F1)*

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis. The City will participate in any working group or sub-committee established by the County of Orange to provide input and direction from a City's perspective in a centralized Emergency Public Information planning activity.

R3. *By September 30, 2019, the County Emergency Operations Center, the six cities interviewed by the Grand Jury and the Orange County Fire Authority should adopt a standard 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: The recommendation has been implemented. The City has developed an Alert and Warning Notification Guideline to assist in issuance of mass notification. This document provides City staff the procedures to develop and send a mass notification in both the WEA service and AlertOC. The City will dedicate staff time to assist in development of a standard written protocol once this committee/working group is established.

R4. *By September 30, 2019, the six cities interviewed by the Grand Jury should pre-select facilities with sufficient technical capability and 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 yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Currently, the City is updating its phone system. This includes utilization of fiber optic lines, back-up micro-link between City facilities, and new switching hardware and new phones. Once this project is completed in the fall of 2019, it will provide additional options to set-up and maintain a more robust Joint Information Center if needed within the City.

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*

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feedback regarding their experience with Emergency Public Information, such as telephone, mail-in, and/or online surveys. (F9)

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented but will implement to meet the September 30, 2019 date. Depending on the scope and magnitude of the emergency and if deemed necessary, the City will utilize community meetings, mail-in and/or online surveys through the City website to identify areas of success and areas of improvement.

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 operation plan for large, widespread disasters. (F11)*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. Even though there is always room for improvement, multiple plans at the federal, state, county and local level to assist in managing large widespread disasters already exist. The City of Yorba Linda, like many cities within Orange County, routinely attend meetings to develop new plans, update existing plans and participated in training exercises to evaluate these plans.

Respectfully,



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