



CITY OF ORANGE

OFFICE OF MAYOR

PHONE: (714) 744-2201 • FAX (714) 744-5147

www.cityoforange.org

September 17, 2019

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

RE: City of Orange Response to Grand Jury Report: Emergency Public Information - "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

Dear Judge Nakamura:

The following is the City of Orange's response to the findings and recommendations contained in the Grand Jury's Report, "Emergency Public Information – Should I Stay or Should I Go?"

Finding

F.1: 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 wholly disagrees with this finding as it relates to the City of Orange. While the Canyon 2 Fire was a dynamic and fast moving incident, residents in the City of Orange were frequently informed of quickly changing evacuation zones through various communication channels.

Finding

F.2: 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 wholly disagrees with this finding as it relates to the City of Orange.

Finding

F.3: 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 wholly disagrees with this finding as it relates to the City of Orange. All three PIO's in the City at the time of the Canyon 2 Fire were well trained public information officials. The designated PIO's for the Orange Police Department and the Orange Fire Department had received certifications through their specific public safety disciplines. The City's PIO had received his certification through the California Public Information Official organization. As to training and written protocols for mass notification systems, the City disagrees in part with this finding. Training on Alert OC was required and completed by City of Orange staff, however certain written protocols were lacking.

Finding

F.4: The County's vendor for the alert OC mass notification system had not updated its GIS mapping software, so some residents in newer neighborhoods did not receive an Alert OC message during the Holy Jim fire.

Response

The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it does not apply to the City of Orange.

Finding

F.5: 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 agrees with this finding.

Finding

F.6: The outdated hotline telephone technology at the County Emergency Operations Center cannot track caller metrics, so staffing decisions are made based on observing the length of time between incoming phone calls.

Response

The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it does not apply to the City of Orange.

Finding

F.7: During the Canyon 2 fire, procedures allowing some hotline workers to pass road closures were ineffective, which led to a shortage of operators during the first day of the fire.

Response

The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it does not apply to the City of Orange.

Finding

F.8: Some hotline operators are not current on the use of the software for logging incoming phone calls, thus decreasing their efficiency.

Response

The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it does not apply to the City of Orange.

Finding

F.9: The County and interviewed cities do not seek sufficient public feedback of the perceptions of effectiveness of the Emergency Public Information.

Response

The City wholly disagrees with this finding as it relates to the City of Orange. Soon after the Canyon 2 Fire, members of the Orange Fire and Police Departments met with representatives from Orange Park Acres and surrounding communities to obtain feedback on evacuation procedures. Recently, follow-up meetings were conducted with these groups in which updated evacuation procedures were reviewed. In addition, the City of Orange has established channels to solicit and obtain resident feedback via the City's website and through a long-standing City Hotline phone number.

Finding

F.10: 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 wholly disagrees with this finding.

Finding

F.11: 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 agrees with this finding. Since the Canyon 2 Fire, the City has been working with the City of Anaheim, the California Highway Patrol and other adjacent jurisdictions to define evacuation routes based on the nature and location of the incident.

Recommendation:

R.1: By September 30, 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

This recommendation does not apply to the City of Orange.

Recommendation:

R.2: 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

This will be implemented in the future as the City of Orange is currently cooperating with the County Operational Area in addressing the coordination of Emergency Public Information.

Recommendation

R.3: 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, Alert OC or any other system is utilized. (**F1, F2, F3, F4, F5**)

Response:

This will be implemented in the future as the City of Orange is cooperating with the County Operational Area in addressing the coordination of mass notification protocols and systems.

Recommendation:

R.4: 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 a potential Joint Information Centers so they can be activated in a timely manner. (**F1**)

Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Orange has designated the Orange Police Department Headquarters, the Orange Fire Department Headquarters, and the Orange Main Library and History Center as potential Joint Information Centers. These facilities have the necessary technology to be quickly activated.

Recommendation:

R.5: By September 30, 2019, the County Emergency Operations Center should modernize its hotline telephone technology. (F6)

Response:

This recommendation does not apply to the City of Orange.

Recommendation:

R.6: By September 30, 2019, the County Emergency Operations Center should ensure hotline personnel maintain current training and are provided appropriate physical access during emergencies. (F7, F8)

Response:

This recommendation does not apply to the City of Orange.

Recommendation:

R.7: 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

This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Orange has established channels to solicit and obtain resident feedback via the City's website and through a long-standing City Hotline phone number.

Recommendation:

R.8: 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:

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future as the City of Orange is cooperating with the County Operational Area in addressing an emergency operations plan for large, wide-spread disasters.

Recommendation:

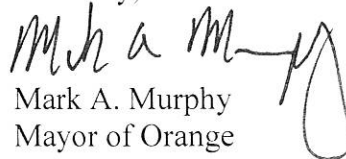
R.9: By September 30, 2019, the Orange County Sheriff's Department should seek, at a minimum, semi-annual updates on Alert OC vendor software and concurrently request regular updates on its capabilities. (F4)

Response:

This recommendation does not apply to the City of Orange.

Thank you for your service and efforts on behalf of the City of Orange. We hope this response will be helpful.

Sincerely,


Mark A. Murphy
Mayor of Orange

cc: Grand Jury