



Fire Department

HEADQUARTERS

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John M. Scherrei
Fire Chief

July 10, 2006

The Honorable Judge Rodney Melville
Superior Court
312-M East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93455-5165

Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury
Attention: Foreman
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Amended Response to Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Reports:
Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center

Honorable Judge Rodney Melville,

On Friday, July 8, 2006. I submitted the Santa Barbara County Fire Department response to the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury's Report on Disaster Preparedness. In this response, I had inadvertently deleted the response to *Finding 4* of the Emergency Operations Center section and the response listed was to *Recommendation 4*. The enclosed letter, dated July 7, 2006, has been amended to include the response to both EOC section *Finding 4* and *Recommendation 4* accordingly. An electronic copy of this amendment is also enclosed.

Please contact me at the letterhead address should you have any questions or require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Scherrei
Fire Chief

JMS:rp
enc

Section: **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

Finding 1: The Santa Barbara County EOC is housed in a temporary modular building that is not rated for an emergency government function and could fail in an earthquake.

Fire Response:

The Fire Department agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1: The Board of Supervisors and County Administration should immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions.

Fire Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. The Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Services have been aware of the need for a new EOC as evidenced by the project's inclusion within the County's Capital Improvement Plan for many years. The financial health of the County has enabled the Board of Supervisors, under the leadership of the County Executive Officer, to include \$3 million towards construction of a new EOC that meets essential facilities standards in the Adopted 2006-07 budget, which goes into effect on July 1, 2006.

Finding 2: In the event of a power failure at the EOC after business hours, emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up to the facility by employees living outside the south coast area.

Fire Response:

The Fire Department partially disagrees with this finding. While the emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up, there are County employees living within the South Coast area that are capable of hooking up the back-up power.

Recommendation 2: Install a dedicated electrical hook-up between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure.

Fire Response:

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within 6 months. The County has secured homeland security grant funding to install an automated switch for the emergency generator. Installation of the automated switch will be completed within 6 months.

Finding 3: Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate the communications systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility and is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Fire Response:

The Fire Department disagrees with this finding. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit.

Recommendation 3: Secure the EOC telephone system and computer networking switching equipment with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines.

Fire Response:

This recommendation has been implemented. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit. There are printed instructions on the equipment.

Finding 4: At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC, it appeared that the facility lacked updated emergency maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision-makers staffing the EOC are expected to go first to their daily work site (office) and pick up information they need before going to the EOC.

Fire Response:

The Fire Department partially disagrees with this finding. Currently there are section boxes, or file boxes, located at the EOC that contain maps, manuals and other information for relevant EOC staff.

Recommendation 4: Provide updated manuals, maps and decision-making information at the EOC at all times for agencies with assigned functions in the EOC.

Fire Response:

This recommendation has already been implemented. Updated manuals, maps and decision-making information at the EOC are provided and located in mailboxes at the EOC so that staff does not need to first go to their daily work site or office. OES will continue to ensure that updated materials are located at the EOC for relevant persons.

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