

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY'S 2009-2010 REPORT
"SANTA BARBARA COUNTY REVERSE 911®
Is Anybody Home"

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1a: *The Sheriff's Department Reverse 911® system accesses all landlines in the county and in the three most recent county fire emergencies, the system reached 49% of affected households.*

Response to Finding 1a: **The Sheriff's Department agrees with this finding.**

Finding 1b: *The Sheriff's Department established an English only on-line registration form for landlines, cellular telephones and internet access.*

Response to Finding 1b: **The Sheriff's Department agrees with this finding.**

Recommendation 1: *The Sheriff's Department revise the entire on-line registration process to allow use in both English and Spanish.*

Response to Recommendation 1: **The Sheriff's Department is actively working with Plant CML, the parent company of Reverse 911® to modify the "self registration portal" to include Spanish as well as English language during the registration process. Plant CML has assured us the Spanish language will be available in the next version of the "self registration portal".**

Finding 2: *The Sheriff's Department Reverse 911® system currently sends emergency messages in both English and Spanish only to those areas they believe have a high concentration of Spanish speakers.*

Response to Finding 2: **The Sheriff's Department agrees in part with this finding and disagrees in part with this finding.**

Recommendation 2: *The Sheriff's Department implement a Reverse 911® emergency message system that alerts all residents of the county in both English and Spanish.*

Response to Recommendation 2: **The Sheriff's Department continues to work with Plant CML, the parent company of Reverse 911® to program a method wherein the calling party may select a message in either Spanish or English when they receive an incoming emergency notification phone call from the Reverse 911® system. The technology exists for persons to select a language when they make a phone call into an automated phone system. Unfortunately, when a person receives a phone call from an automated message machine, that option to select another language is not usually available. Plant CML recognizes this deficiency in the system and has advised us of two different workarounds.**

The first would be to record the message in both English and Spanish and at the beginning of the message advise the recipient in Spanish that they need to listen through the English message for the Spanish message. Providing the information will at least double the time that it takes for an emergency notification message to be broadcast.

PlantCML engineers have suggested that our Communications Dispatchers use an existing feature for making English / Spanish emergency notifications through their system. Reverse 911® has a survey feature that will allow the recipient to press 1 for a notification in English or 2 for a notification in Spanish. Separate messages may then be recorded for the corresponding language. The down side to use of this “survey” feature will be an increase in the message size, thereby increasing the amount of time that the emergency message will take to broadcast. It is the intention of the Sheriff’s Department to try this workaround in any future usage of the system, until Plant CML enhances their product to include an easy to use English / Spanish interface, or it is determined that continued use of the “survey” causes a detriment to public safety.