

**A REPORT BY  
THE 2013-2014 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
725 Court Street  
Martinez, California 94553

**REPORT 1409**

**COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

**READY OR NOT?**

APPROVED BY THE GRAND JURY:

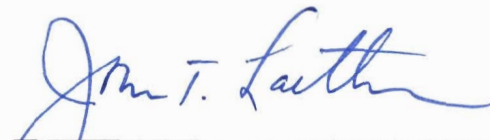
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JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report 1409

**COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS**

***Ready or Not?***

**TO:** Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors  
Contra Costa County Sheriff

**CC:** All Contra Costa County Fire Districts and Departments

**SUMMARY**

According to the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), the County's location, diverse population centers, long coastline, numerous railways and roadways place it at risk from a wide variety of hazards. These include earthquake-related hazards (such as ground shaking, liquefaction, fault surface rupture and tsunamis) and weather-related hazards, (such as floods, landslides, and wildfires). In addition, there are risks resulting from the transit of hazardous materials through the County by rail and road, as well as from the operation of oil refineries and chemical plants.

It is essential that the County maintain a viable and current Emergency Operations Plan (the *Plan*) and that the County Emergency Operations Center (the *Center*) is constructed, equipped and staffed to serve the County's disaster preparedness and emergency service's needs.

- The *Plan* being used today is a draft document that has never been approved by the Board of Supervisors and has not been updated since November 2011.
- The *Plan's* drafters' self-imposed schedule to update it annually appears unrealistic since the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has not approved any of the previous revisions.
- The *Center* is a shared facility that is not constructed to survive a major earthquake or natural disaster, and is too small and otherwise inadequate for sustained operations.
- There is neither a clear strategy nor an ongoing effort to update the current *Center* facility.

## METHODOLOGY

In preparing this report, the Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury:

- Researched County Board of Supervisors (BOS), Public Protection Committee, Internal Operations Committee, and Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) web sites including minutes and agenda items relating to emergency preparedness and emergency operations.
- Interviewed County officials.
- Toured the Contra Costa County *Center*, and visited the Solano County *Center*.
- Reviewed the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) *Taming Natural Disasters* report, and its Contra Costa County Annex, (the foundation documents for the County's LHMP).
- Reviewed the Contra Costa County LHMP and *Plan*.

## BACKGROUND

### Organization

County responsibilities for emergency preparedness and emergency operations are divided between the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the County Administrator. Both offices have management responsibilities and are first responders in the case of an actual incident.

### Hazards

According to ABAG's *Taming Natural Disasters* report, and the section of the report relating to Contra Costa, called "Contra Costa County Annex," the faults that pass through the County are all capable of causing significantly destructive earthquakes. These faults cross critical infrastructure such as water, natural gas and petroleum pipelines, roads, highways, railroads and the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system.

Numerous petroleum and chemical production facilities operate in the County. Hazardous materials are produced at these facilities and then transported via the industrial corridor, Highway 4. One major petroleum manufacturer is located on top of the Hayward Fault, and another is located over the Concord Fault.

Most of the County's population is located in the urban corridors along Highways 4 and 24, and along Interstate 80 and 680. According to the section of the draft *Plan* called "Threat Summary and Assessment," during an emergency the County may be isolated from the surrounding communities. Although the County and its *Center* face a major challenge in preparing for this possibility, the *Plan* lacks a strategy for operating as a self-sufficient entity.

## Directives

The County must comply with certain directives relating to disaster preparedness to continue to receive disaster-related funding.

On the federal level, the **Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000** requires all cities, counties, and special districts to adopt an LHMP to receive disaster mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The LHMP must be updated every five years.

At the state level, **California Assembly Bill 2140**, which became effective on January 1, 2007, placed limits on the amount of additional State funding to local jurisdictions "...unless a local jurisdiction has an approved LHMP...."

**Resolution No. 2007/213** was passed by the BOS on April 17, 2007, adopting the LHMP, thereby complying with both the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and California Assembly Bill 2140.

The Sheriff's OES was designated as the lead County department responsible for preparing the LHMP. The LHMP is a key input to the County's *Plan*.

## The Plan

The *Plan* is the guiding document for the County's emergency operations. The *Plan*:

- Establishes the emergency management organization responsible for mitigating any significant emergency or disaster affecting the Contra Costa Operational Area.
- Establishes the overall operational activities and the response process for Contra Costa's *Center*
- Provides information on how and when the *Center's* emergency management team is activated.

A draft *Plan* was published in January 2006. On July 20, 2009, the Internal Operations Committee of the BOS received an updated draft *Plan* from the Sheriff's OES. Subsequent draft revisions were published in September 2009; in May, June, and July of 2010; and in January, May, and November of 2011. There have been no revisions since 2011.

The draft 2011 *Plan* self-imposes an annual revision cycle, and requires BOS approval. The annual update appears unrealistic since the BOS has not approved any of the previous revisions.

The oversight and management of the County's emergency preparedness and emergency operations are shared between the Sheriff's OES and the County Administrator, both of whom are first responders when the *Center* is activated.

The functions, capabilities, and response requirements for the *Center* are specified in the *Plan*.

## **The Emergency Operations Center (The *Center*)**

The *Center* is located at 50 Glacier Drive, Martinez, CA. On a day-to-day basis, the facility is under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff and serves the following agencies:

- Contra Costa County Sheriff's OES.
- Homeland Security Unit.
- Emergency Services Support Unit.
- Community Warning System Unit.

The *Center* is not activated for all emergencies. However, when it is activated, (the above listed), routine daily operations are displaced.

Studies identify the following factor as important in locating an emergency center:

- **Survivability** — The facility must be able to withstand the most likely disasters as determined by a hazards and vulnerability analysis.

The Sheriff's Operation Center and the Emergency Operations Center are housed in a converted vehicle storage unit. During interviews and tours, it was reported that the *Center* is not constructed to survive a major earthquake or natural disaster.

- **Accessibility** — The facility should be accessible by staff and responders during disaster/emergency operations, e.g. multiple access roads.

The *Center* is located on an access road adjacent to Highway 4, and can be accessed from multiple directions. However, there is a possibility that the requisite staff will not be able to reach their assigned stations in a reasonable timeframe because *Center* personnel are domiciled in adjacent communities and counties, across bridges, and through tunnels. As stated in the *Plan*, being isolated from adjacent communities is a potential hazard.

- **Size** — The facility should have enough square footage to comfortably house all staff. The recommended square footage per staff member is approximately 65 square feet. The *Center* is located in a converted vehicle storage unit. It is a fairly small building, which lacks a kitchen, food storage area, bathroom, and sleeping arrangements necessary to accommodate staff for more than 24 hours while the *Center* is fully activated.

Because the facility serves as the Sheriff's Operations Center on a day-to-day basis, some utilities, services, connectivity, and communications are operational. However, it reportedly would still take approximately four hours to get the *Center* fully staffed and functioning.

**The Alternate Emergency Operations Center** is a converted recreational vehicle. Although it is much smaller in capacity than the permanent facility, it is able to provide support for a limited time. However, in the event of an earthquake or other serious incident, both the primary and the alternate centers could become inoperable, thereby jeopardizing centralized control and support to the incident commander.

County officials have indicated that they place high priority on updating the *Center*, and have indicated they will do so as funds are made available. However, there is neither a clear strategy nor an ongoing effort to update the current facility.

## FINDINGS

1. The potential hazards to County facilities and communities are well documented and include both earthquake and weather-related hazards. One of the major challenges the County faces in planning for emergencies is the possibility of being isolated from the surrounding communities.
2. The Emergency Operations Plan being used today is a draft document that has never been approved by the Board of Supervisors and has not been updated since 2011.
3. The *Plan's* drafters' self-imposed schedule to update it annually is unrealistic since the Board of Supervisors has not approved any of the previous revisions.
4. The current Emergency Operations Center, located at 50 Glacier Drive in Martinez, is inadequate. It is not constructed to survive a major earthquake or natural disaster, is too small and is otherwise insufficient for sustained operations.
5. There is neither a clear strategy nor an ongoing effort to update the current Emergency Operations Center.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. The Sheriff should update the Emergency Operations Plan.
2. The Board of Supervisors should approve an updated Emergency Operations Plan.
3. The County should plan for and construct a permanent Emergency Operations Center if funds become available.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors	1-5	1-3
Contra Costa County Sheriff	1-5	1-3

## COPY FOR INFORMATION ONLY – NO RESPONSE REQUIRED

	<u>Findings</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
Contra Costa County Chief Administrative Officer		
Contra Costa County Director of Public Works		
City of El Cerrito Fire Department		
City of Pinole Fire Department		
City of Richmond Fire Department		
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District		
Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District		
East Contra Costa Fire Protection District		
Kensington Fire Protection District		
Moraga-Orinda Fire District		
Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District		
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District		