

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

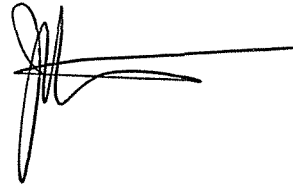
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: October 15, 2008

CF No. 08-2052

To: Public Safety Committee

From: James G. Featherstone, General Manager
Emergency Management Department



Subject: **EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS EVALUATION**

On August 1, 2008, Council members Wendy Gruel and Greig Smith introduced a motion directing the Emergency Operations Board to report to the Council on the City's response to the July 29, 2008 Chino Hills Earthquake. In support of this request, the Emergency Management Department (EMD), working through the Emergency Operations Organization (EOO), collected response information and recommendations from all involved departments. This information was reviewed and formatted into the City's formal After Action/Corrective Action (AAR) report format. The attached AAR was approved by the Emergency Management Committee on October 1, 2008, with the recommendation it be forwarded to the EOB at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Event Summary:

At 11:42 a.m. on July 29, 2008, a magnitude 5.4 earthquake occurred in Chino Hills, California. At the request of the Office of the Mayor, EMD and the Los Angeles Police and Fire Departments, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated at a Level 2 at 12:20 p.m. While the earthquake caused minimal damage and disruption to the City of Los Angeles, the EOC was activated in order to coordinate damage assessment and impact to the City as well as the development and release of emergency public information.

The attached report represents a summarization of departmental comments and recommendations. EMD will be the lead agency for implementing and tracking the recommended corrective actions.

If there are any questions, please call Anna Burton at 213-978-0528.

Attachment

OCT 16 2008
PUBLIC SAFETY

- DRAFT -



**After Action/Corrective Action Report
July 29, 2008
Chino Hills Earthquake
EOC Activation**

September 24, 2008



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I. Executive Summary

A. Statement of Purpose

Homeland security preparedness involves a cycle of outreach, planning, capability development, training, exercising, actual responses to events both planned and unplanned, evaluation, and improvement. The Emergency Management Department (EMD) is responsible for preparing a formal After Action Report/Corrective Action Report (AAR/CAR) following all activations of the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). AAR/CARs are intended to assist the City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Organization (EOO) analyze its EOC activation, staffing and management processes in order to document the following:

- Practices to sustain and build upon
- Practices to improve
- Recommended corrective actions and improvement plan

The AAR/CAR should be viewed as suggestions for improving the effectiveness of future EOC activations. Recommended corrective actions identify steps to be taken and assign specific City agencies with responsibility for their coordination and implementation. Timetables are also established for implementation along with an assessment of required resources. Agencies must weigh the cost of implementation against the benefits in determining resource allocation. In some cases, agencies may determine the benefits of implementation are insufficient to outweigh the costs. In other cases, agencies may identify alternative solutions that are more effective. Each agency should review the recommendations and determine the most appropriate action and time needed for implementation.

B. Event Name

Chino Hills Earthquake

C. Event Date(s)

July 29, 2008

D. Event Location

Earthquake epicenter located in Chino Hills, CA. City of Los Angeles EOC activated (200 N. Main Street, P-4 Level, Los Angeles, CA 90012)

E. EOC Activation Duration

3 hours, 40 minutes; EOC activated from 12:20 pm – 4:00 pm

F EOC Activation Lead Agency

Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD)

G. EOC Activation Level

II (Level I, plus additional agencies as requested by EOC Director)

H. EOC Activation Participating Agencies

- City Administrative Officer (CAO)
- Emergency Management Department (EMD)
- Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD)
- Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)
- Department of General Services (GSD)
- Information Technology Agency (ITA)
- Office of the Mayor
- Department of Public Works (PW)
- Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP)
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Department of Water and Power (DWP)

I. EOC Activation Chronology

07/29/2008

11:42 Earthquake occurs
11:45 EMD activates "LA Citywatch" process in EOC
11:50 Mayor's Office, LAFD and LAPD staff report to EOC
11:55 Initial situation briefing
12:10 Decision made to activate EOC at Level II
12:15 EMD, LAFD and LAPD confirm agencies required to respond to EOC
12:20 EMD requests ITA 3-1-1 Call Center to notify EOC responders
12:25 ITA 3-1-1 Call Center begins notification process
12:30 Responders begin reporting to EOC
12:35 ITA 3-1-1 Call Center concludes notification process
12:40 Second situation briefing; media release data prepared
12:50 EOC responders post situation status data into WebEOC system
13:00 Responders continue to report to EOC; PIOs prepare Acting Mayor for 13:30 media briefing
13:20 All requested EOC response agencies have reported to EOC
13:25 EMD, LAFD and LAPD begin formal EOC management process
13:30 Acting Mayor holds media briefing
13:45 EOC Management Section holds first formal situation status and strategy meeting
14:00 EOC Sections meet and begin specific processes; departments report on damage assessment and operational status into WebEOC

15:00 EOC Management Section, Command Staff and General Staff hold situation status and objectives meeting. Given the limited reports of damage and minimal impact of the earthquake on the City, decision is made to deactivate the EOC at 16:00 hours
15:30 EOC Sections conclude processes and posting of data into WebEOC
16:00 EOC deactivated

J. Synopsis

The following is a narrative of significant events regarding activation of the EOC. Areas of concern that require improvement and specific recommendations for corrective action are included in Part II and III of this report.

At 11:42 a.m. on July 29, 2008, a magnitude 5.4 earthquake occurred in Chino Hills, CA. At 11:45 am, EMD activated its "LA Citywatch" program to collect and analyze information from City response agencies. After further discussion with the Mayor's Office and the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAD), the decision was made to activate the City's EOC at a Level II at 12:20 pm. While the earthquake caused minimal damage and disruption to the City of Los Angeles, the EOC was activated in order to coordinate damage assessment and impact to the City as well as the development and release of emergency public information.

Both the Mayor and President of the City Council were out of town when this earthquake occurred. Pursuant to provisions of the City Charter, Council President Pro Tempore Wendy Gruel was the Acting Mayor. In addition to the designated personnel identified within the City's Emergency Operations Master Plan and Procedures (Master Plan) for specific management support and emergency public information EOC response roles, additional staff from the Office of the Mayor and Acting Mayor self-responded. This amplified number of EOC personnel caused some confusion regarding the role of the Mayor's Office during the initial phase of this event.

The presence of non-requested staff caused confusion about who was in charge of the EOC management process. This resulted in a forty five minute delay of staff initiating approved EOC protocols. Given the low consequence of the earthquake to the City, this delay had a minor impact on EOC operations. However, had the earthquake been more severe or impacted the City more directly, this delay could have seriously impacted the EOC's ability to begin its standard operating procedures of action planning and response coordination.

EMD worked with ITA's 3-1-1 Call Center to notify City departments to respond to the EOC. The Call Center performed its function effectively. EMD identified some areas for improvement in our formatting and processing of initial activation information to 3-1-1. Most department responders reported to the EOC within thirty minutes of the notification. Some responders encountered problems accessing the P-4 level of City Hall East via stairwell doors which delayed their response to the EOC. Some departments took more than 45 minutes to respond which resulted in the absence of

their reports in the initial briefing. EMD identified additional agencies needed in the EOC for response and coordinated directly with them (CAO, Recreation and Parks). The activation also pointed out the need to request response from additional agencies with damage assessment functions (Bureau of Engineering, Board of Public Works, Department of Building and Safety, and Housing Department) even in cases where damage to the City appears minimal.

Within one hour of the activation, responders were in place and all sections of the EOC were fully operational. While responders were able to post situation status information into WebEOC, some experienced difficulties due to technical problems as well as unfamiliarity with the application. Several responders were unfamiliar with their specific section or branch responsibilities pointing out the need for additional training. Within two hours of activation, EOC management processes were in operation and a formal situation status and strategy meeting was conducted by the Management Section, Command and General Staff.

EOC Management was called upon to provide situation update to the Acting Mayor for use in a 1:30 pm press briefing. With only an hour to collect and analyze data, this information was preliminary in nature. Future activations will benefit from more rapid reporting to and analysis of information by the Planning and Intelligence Section. Additionally, the EOC Planning and Intelligence Section deferred some of its duties regarding analysis and reporting of situation status information to the Operations Section which functioned more proactively and effectively in this area. Additional training is required to clarify these roles and responsibilities between sections.

Emergency public information was a major issue in this activation. Public information officers from the Mayor's Office, LAPD and LAFD responded. The identification of leadership within the Information and Public Affairs Section needs to be clarified. The Master Plan currently identifies the Office of the Mayor as the Section Coordinator. It is critically important that all agencies with personnel involved in emergency and crisis communication work collaboratively in emergency preparedness and response situations. Additional training is required to clarify these roles and responsibilities.

Based on media accounts and first hand reports, there was some confusion regarding the City's Building Emergency Education Program (BEEP). Some employees appeared confused about proper building life safety procedures during and after an earthquake. Many employees did not duck, cover and hold, nor did there seem to be an awareness that this is the City's recommended practice. Some employees self-evacuated while others left to take their lunch break. City departments should be urged to send and re-sent their employees to BEEP fire life safety training. The existing BEEP policies and training programs should also be reviewed to ensure they adequately address special needs populations.

It was reported in the media that a public address system announcement was made to employees and visitors in City Hall regarding the earthquake but not in other civic center buildings. The Building Emergency Coordinator (BEC) in City Hall notified occupants

because of the announcements being made in the City Council Chambers. There were no notifications through the public address system in City Hall East (CHE) which caused some elected officials to report that procedures were not being followed. The CHE BEC was in contact with the floor wardens via email and was actively monitoring the situation. Employees in several Civic Center buildings spontaneously evacuated. Although the existing procedures were properly followed, the Civic Center BECs met on August 21, 2008 to review the procedures in light of reported confusion.

Departments that responded to the EOC posted situation status information to WebEOC. Departments not required to physically respond must be reminded of the need to post situation status information in the system even if their operations are normal.

A final situation status and objectives meeting was held at 3:00 pm where it was determined that based on the minimal impact to the City, the EOC could be deactivated at 4:00 pm. Staff were advised to conclude their activities. EMD staff remained in the center until 5:00 pm.

II. Findings

(A) Practices to Sustain

- Activation decision was made collaboratively between EMD, LAFD, LAPD and the Mayor's Office
- The majority of departments requested to respond to the EOC provided staff in a timely fashion.
- EMD's new EOC organizational and planning protocols were implemented and provided improved direction on the "EOC Process."
- The EOC Operations Section provided the Planning and Intelligence Section and the EOC Director with good agency operational situation status.
- LAPD, LAFD, Public Works and Building and Safety conducted damage assessment in accordance with the City's Emergency Operations Master Plan and Procedures (Master Plan)

(B) Areas Requiring Improvement

- EMD did not provide ITA 3-1-1 Call Center with complete documentation when requesting EOC activation call out.
- Self deployment of staff to the EOC impeded the EOC Director's ability to establish control of the EOC and execute approved processes.
- EMD did not provide Department of General Services (GSD) Office of Public Safety (OPS) with sufficient direction on EOC security needs which resulted in ineffective responder check-in. EOC security protocols need to be reviewed.
- Departmental response to the EOC after notification by the 3-1-1 Call Center was not completed within a reasonable time.

- Some EOC responders did not have security card clearance and access to CHE P-4 stairwell doors. With elevators inoperable for a period of time this impeded their ability to respond via stairwells.
- Many EOC responders experienced problems with communications systems, specifically cellular telephones and the Wireless Priority System (WPS)
- Many EOC responders were not familiar with the new EOC process, their specific section/branch/unit duties, or use of the WebEOC information management system.
- Existing WebEOC situation status boards need to be further refined and developed in order to achieve effective overall situational awareness.
- Review the capability of WebEOC to create an EOC organization chart based on responder log-in. Organization chart creation was ineffective in this activation.
- Agencies not requested to respond to the EOC still need to provide the EOC with situation status reports on their operations.
- EOC Sections would benefit from a better understanding of their specific missions and the working relationship with one another.
- Established emergency public information protocols need to be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- The following agencies should be required to respond to any Level II EOC activation, specifically those related to an earthquake scenario. (Department of Water and Power, Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Street Services, Board of Public Works, Department of Building and Safety, Housing Department, Department of Recreation and Parks).
- The Board of Public Works should be notified and required to respond to any activation where one or more Public Works bureaus are requested to respond.
- Although the Building Emergency Education Program (BEEP) followed existing procedures, there should be a careful review of the potential benefits of using public address system announcements in City facilities after earthquakes. This review is already underway.
- EMD should develop a template for EOC activation in earthquake scenarios that establishes a minimum recommend standard for activation level and agencies required to respond.

III. Conclusion

Activation of the EOC for this event proved to be of great value to the City's efforts to review, revise and improve management processes, responder training and overall work flow in the center. The Chino Hills Earthquake had a relatively minor impact on the City of Los Angeles, its operations, facilities, staff and systems. Yet activation of the EOC gave us an ideal "low consequence" event to deploy the center and gauge our effectiveness. This proved to be especially valuable in light of recent revisions to our "EOC Process," and the ongoing need to improve, deliver and measure training.

The activation revealed several key issues for continued focus and improvement from activation notification protocols to responder qualifications and understanding of their role(s) in the EOC, and the ways in which we share information and situational

awareness during emergencies. And while most of these issues fall under the jurisdiction of EMD as facilities manager for the EOC, all departments with response roles need to examine their operational readiness in terms of EOC training, exercising, communications and resources.

Below is a list of specific recommended improvements/corrective actions. Questions regarding the recommendations can be directed to Rob Freeman at 213 978-0590 or rob.freeman@lacity.org. EMD staff will provide monthly reports to the Emergency Management Committee (EMC) on the status of implementation of corrective actions.

IV. 07/29/2008 Chino Hills Earthquake EOC Activation Improvement Plan - Recommended Corrective Actions

No	Required Improvement	Corrective Action	Lead Agency	Timetable	Resources Required
1	EMD must provide ITA 3-1-1 Call Center with complete documentation when requesting EOC activation call out.	Review and revise current documentation procedures and format for the call out to insure completeness and accuracy.	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
2	Mayor's Office staff should follow approved EOC response plan and management processes	Provide Mayor's Office staff with executive level EOC responder training.	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD and Mayor's Office staff. Revised EOC management curriculum
3	EMD must provide Department of General Services (GSD) Office of Public Safety (OPS) with sufficient direction on EOC security during activations. EOC security protocols need to be reviewed.	EMD to meet with GSD OPS to review and revise as necessary all relevant EOC activation security protocols; includes Citywide Master Plan and GSD Department Emergency Plan	EMD	60 days	Existing EMD and GSD staff
4	Ensure departments requested to respond to EOC activations do so in a timely manner	Absent catastrophic circumstances, departments requested to respond to the EOC during regular business hours are expected to report in person or communicate their status within 30 minutes of notification.	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD and EOO staff
5	Ensure EOC responders can access the facility via stairwell doors.	Provide EOC responders with card key security access to CHE P-4 stairwell doors.	EMD	60 days	Existing EMD and GSD staff
6	Ensure EOC responders are able to communicate with the Center during emergencies.	Review performance of key communications systems during the earthquake, specifically cellular telephone providers and the Wireless Priority System (WPS)	EMD/ITA	90 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
7	Ensure EOC responders are familiar with the new EOC process, specific section/branch/unit duties, and use of the WebEOC.	Provide additional EOC responder training that focuses on the new processes, specific duties and WebEOC	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
8	Existing WebEOC situation status boards need to be further refined and developed in order to achieve more effective overall situational awareness.	Develop new WebEOC status board capabilities and make necessary improvements to existing ones.	EMD/ITA	60 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
9	Improve EOC organization chart creation capabilities	Review the capability of WebEOC to chart the EOC organization based on responder log-in.	EMD/ITA	90 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
10	Agencies not requested to respond still need to provide the EOC with situation status reports on their operations.	WebEOC needs to be more fully used by agencies. Provide additional user training and system awareness.	EMD/ITA	30 days	Existing EMD and ITA staff
11	Ensure responders at EOC Sections better understand their specific missions and the working relationship with one another.	Provide additional Section specific EOC responder training	EMD	30 days	Existing EOC staff
12	Established emergency public information Master Plan protocols were not followed.	Role and specific duties of Mayor's Office staff need to be reviewed.	EMD	60 days	Existing EMD and Mayor's Office staff

07/29/2008 Chino Hills Earthquake EOC Activation Improvement Plan - Recommended Corrective Actions

No	Required Improvement	Corrective Action	Lead Agency	Timetable	Resources Required
13	The Board of Public Works should be notified and required to respond to any activation where one or more Public Works bureaus are requested to respond.	Revise EOC notification procedures to require automatic notification of Board of Public Works when one or more bureaus are requested to respond	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD staff.
14	Review Building Emergency Education Program (BEEP) procedures to determine if public address announcements should be made in all facilities following an earthquake and to ensure special needs populations issues are addressed.	Review existing procedures and report to EMC on the potential benefits of making public address announcements following an earthquake, and to ensure special needs populations issues are addressed.	GSD	30 days	Existing GSD staff.
15	The City needs a template for minimum recommended EOC activation level and agency representation in earthquake scenarios	Develop a specific template for minimum recommended EOC activation level and agency representation in earthquake scenarios	EMD	30 days	Existing EMD staff