



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: February 17, 2009
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Pamela Mottice-Muller
Subject: Shakeout & Golden Guardian After Action Report/Improvement
Plan
Attachments: None

INTRODUCTION

On November 13, 2008 the Shakeout and Golden Guardian exercise was performed throughout Southern California including the City of Beverly Hills. The purpose of this exercise was to provide City employees and stakeholders an opportunity to rehearse effective emergency management behaviors to reduce the loss of life and property in the event of a major disaster. The full 65-page After Action Report is available for review in the Office of Emergency Management.

The Shakeout exercise hypothesized a magnitude 7.8 earthquake on the lower San Andreas Fault beginning near the Salton Sea and extending into northern LA County. The City of Beverly Hills suffered minor to moderate damage, while east LA County experienced moderate to severe damage. Even though extensive structural damage was not reported within the City, all of southern California lost access to vital lifelines and many commuters were left stranded due to impassable transportation routes. The earthquake and resultant damage estimates were developed by the U.S. Geological Survey in coordination with experts from many fields and disciplines to create a realistic and scientifically supported disaster exercise.

DISCUSSION

The Great California Shakeout was the largest earthquake drill in the United States history. All City of Beverly Hills employees as well as the Beverly Hills School District participated in "Drop, Cover, and Hold" at 10 am, thus beginning the exercise. Over 665 City employees participated in part or all of the exercise. The exercise used over eighty-five role players including but not limited to CERT & DCS members, UCLA volunteers, Commissioners, City employees, and BHUSD school children.

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Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities:

The objective of the exercise was to test the City's ability to react to a major disaster such as an earthquake and to rehearse effective emergency response behavior that would mitigate damage within the City. To test City employees, a series of one hundred and 70 items were injected into the scenario for the various departments participating in the exercise.

Some of the main activities and tasks included:

- Activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), two Department Operations Center's (DOC), the disaster hotline and a shelter.
- Multi-causality incident at Horace Mann School with Unified Command and in conjunction with the school district.
- Critical Infrastructure compromised such as water and sewer pipe ruptures and contaminations and reservoir leaks.
- Prioritization and inspections of all City structures.
- Public Safety practiced handling multiple emergencies occurring simultaneously.

Target Capabilities are main areas/components and performance levels of disaster response and recovery developed by the Department of Homeland Security. The following capabilities were exercised during the exercise:

- Communications
- Community Preparedness and Participation
- Economic and Community Recovery
- Emergency Operations Center Management
- Emergency Public Information and Warning
- Firefighting Operations and Support
- Mass Care
- Onsite Incident Management

Debriefings

Following the Shakeout and Golden Guardian exercise, debriefings/evaluations were held and completed with the following groups/individuals:

- Policy Group
- EOC Team members
- EOC Sections
- Selected Individual Departments: CD, PW, PD, FD
- Selected Individual EOC Functions: Hotline, PIO, Dispatch
- Design team
- Volunteers including victims, role players, commissioners
- EERT in each building
- Others

Information from these debriefings combined with the evaluators comments were used to complete the After Action Report. The report is intended to highlight the positive aspects of the recent disaster exercise as well as identify various recommendations to improve the City's ability to respond in the future. It is not meant as a criticism but an identification of areas of strengths and improvements.

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Identified Strengths

- At some level all exercise objectives were met.
- All City Employees participated in some form throughout the day, enforcing what actions should be taken after a disaster and the concept that every City employee is a disaster worker.
- Largest exercise ever completed with multiple components.
- Public Safety field component went well.
- Staff was able to see how all components of the emergency management structure work together.
- All parts of operation were much more cohesive.
- Situation status and mapping was much improved.
- EOC and field staff knew and understood their roles and responsibilities.
- Actual damage assessment was completed by multi-sources.
- Developed policy goals and EOC objectives.
- Participation with Beverly Hills School District.

Identified Areas of Improvement

- The EOC is too small and often not conducive to the operation, a stand alone larger EOC needs to be built which will include better technology and provide ease in EOC operations, coordination and processes.
- Continue to exercise and clarify roles: Policy Group's role as Policy Makers, EOC Team as Managers.
- Timely EOC Meetings must be held.
- City should build depth in knowledge base.
- Communication between all levels of the organization. Timely and adequate information must be passed and compiled.
- Purchase Process must be clearly defined.

The Golden Guardian exercise was successful. It met its objectives and pointed out areas of improvement that can be addressed by future training, system upgrades and continued participation of all departments. A follow-up matrix has been developed. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is already working with departments to address many of these issues. In addition departments have completed separate debriefings and identified other follow-up opportunities.

This exercise served to confirm the past exercises recommendation to construct a new standalone EOC. Currently under construction, the new EOC will solve many of the logistical, technological, and even EOC processes deficiencies. When designing the new EOC, past deficiencies were incorporated including enhancing the check-in, security, tracking of incidents and resources, and board displays through technology.

One point of interest is the need for the City to be self-sufficient for 3 to 7 days becomes more apparent in each exercise the City participates with the County of Los Angeles. It has become increasingly obvious that in a large-scale disaster that the County, in all capacities, will be quickly overrun and incapable of providing needed support to the Cities. It is important the City of Beverly Hills continues to strive to build self reliance in all areas.

All supporting documents and After Action Reports for the exercise are on file in OEM.

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FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact to complete the after action items is minimal. Much of the follow up is staff time.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the continued education and training of City employees, stakeholders, and community members through exercises. Through the EOC remodel, system upgrades, and continued practice, training and education, the City will continue to strengthen our ability to respond and recover when a disaster occurs.

Pamela Mottice-Muller