

Running Head: SETTING THE FOUNDATION OF A FUNCTIONAL EOC

Setting the Foundation of a Functional Emergency Operations Center

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Abstract

The problem was that the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District policy for the Emergency Operations Center had not been modified to reflect the most recent changes to the local hazard mitigation plans and emergency operations plans within the service area. Determining how to structure emergency management system components and ensure a cohesive strategy is integral to the functional design of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Emergency Operations Center policy was the purpose of the research. Action research methodology was used. The research questions served to identify service expectations that could be reasonably made available to the three municipal governments served while still maintaining continuity of services. Interviews were conducted with government officials responsible for emergency management functions; interview questions discussed local hazard mitigation plans, emergency management system components and provided general expectations of facility and resource needs. The literature review provided a global common theme that transcended all levels of government and validated the inherent duty of governmental agencies to promote disaster resilient communities. The interview results confirmed a priority on staffing job knowledge that supported a fundamental and flexible policy. There was a common belief that a functional Emergency Operations Center built on a continuous cycle of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery is able to provide a community with a measurable reduction in losses associated with disasters. Based on the research findings, it was recommended that the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District approve a policy that defined an independent Department Operations Center with provisions to support pre-identified components of the Emergency Operations Center's of the three governmental agencies served by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District.

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Introduction

In 2005 the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District updated the Operations-Policy and Procedure for the Emergency Operations Center (San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District [SRVFPD], 2005). The problem was that the document did not reflect the current policies and procedures among the three municipal agencies that emergency services are provided to. There was not a cohesive strategy in place to ensure local hazard mitigation plans and emergency operations plans will be coordinated in the event of multiple Emergency Operations Center's activating simultaneously within the service area.

The purpose for this research was to provide the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District with an emergency management system that is in compliance with state and federal law and is coordinated with municipal agencies within the service area and effectively prepares for continuity of services during major emergency management activities. The Applied Research Project (ARP) was developed utilizing the action research methodology. The result was the development of revisions to the existing Emergency Operations Center, Operations – Policy and Procedure that meet the expectations of the municipal agencies served, outline roles and responsibilities, promote the use of staffing resources with inherent job knowledge and support the continuity of services provided to the community.

The research questions were: (a) what emergency management system components are necessary in order to meet state and federal law to ensure the District is in compliance to allow for maximum reimbursement when a disaster is appropriately declared?, (b) what required emergency management system components does the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District currently have in place?, (c) what Emergency Operations Center components are other fire agencies in California of similar authority providing?, and (d) how can the District best organize

and document in policy the Emergency Operations Center components necessary to ensure compliance with related laws and a cohesive strategy among other governmental agencies within the service area?

Background and Significance

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District is one of ten fire agencies within Contra Costa County, California. As set forth in the Contra Costa Operational Area-Emergency Operations Plan (Contra Costa County, 2010); Contra Costa County has a population of approximately 1.1 million in nineteen incorporated cities/towns and unincorporated areas (p. 43). The County is surrounded by water on three sides, the San Francisco Bay to the west, the Sacramento River to the North and the San Joaquin River to the east. The topography varies from a rugged mountain range to the adjacent bodies of water. The built environment includes major transportation infrastructure, hazardous industrial processes, high density urban areas and rural wildland areas. Within the boundaries are 740 square miles of land and 82 square miles of water. The probable natural, technological and human caused threats have been identified in the Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigations Plan (Contra Costa County, 2011), the plan was updated and approved by the County Board of Supervisors in June 2011.

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD) is located in the southwest corner of the County and serves a population of approximately 169,900 within 155 square miles. SRVFPD serves two incorporated municipalities; the Town of Danville and the City of San Ramon, as well as a portion of unincorporated communities including Alamo, Blackhawk and the Morgan Territory within Contra Costa County. Approximately 50 percent of the jurisdiction is bordered with the County of Alameda.

The SRVFPD is an autonomous Special District as defined by the State of California, Health and Safety Code Section 13800 (Hlth. & Sfty. Code, §13800). The elected governing body is a five member board that serves four year terms. In 2011 SRVFPD employed approximately 200 personnel and 50 volunteers serving in various positions. The SRVFPD maintains 10 fire stations and approximately 45 emergency response personnel on duty each day.

In 2010, SRVFPD was accredited by the Commission of the Center for Public Excellence, Inc. (2011). As part of this effort SRVFPD has in place a Standards of Cover (San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, 2010) document adopted by the Board of Directors that identifies resource deployment standards based on risk analysis and planning strategy. The SRVFPD has identified and documented emergency response plans to potential threats and hazards within the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Disaster Plan (San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, 2010).

Currently, the City of San Ramon draft Emergency Operations Plan (City of San Ramon, 2010) and the Town of Danville Emergency Operations Plan (Town of Danville, 2008) identify the primary location of their Emergency Operations Center within the SRVFPD Administrative Building. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Operations-Policy and Procedure for Emergency Operations Center (SRVFPD, 2005) inaccurately identifies the location of the Danville Emergency Operations Center in the dayroom of SRVFPD Fire Station 31. The current policy is structured to support both of the Emergency Operations Center's; each with a chief officer to manage information between the Emergency Operations Center's and the SRVFPD Emergency Communications Center. The SRVFPD policy also states that it will commit whatever resources are at disposal to maximize the effectiveness of each Emergency Operations Center and mitigate any emergency that may occur. The current SRVFPD policy does not

identify an independent department Emergency Operations Center or address a plan for continuity of services.

The lack of cohesiveness and coordination of current emergency operations plans within the SRVFPD service area is a known weakness within the emergency management efforts. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Annual Operating Budget Fiscal Year 2010/2011 (San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, 2010) documents two pertinent goals to be achieved;

6. Identify functionality and operational improvements for the Department Operations Center. Increase staff knowledge and training in incident support functions and emergency management skills" (p.39)

12. develop an emergency response plan manual to provide guidelines and promote effective response to meet the demands of predicted or actual heightened service requests identified within the Disaster Plan" (p.40).

The Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction course curriculum of the United States Fire Administration, Executive Fire Officer Program (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2011) focused on a senior fire executive's responsibility to identify measurable actions to reduce a community's risk from multi-hazards or threats. It instilled that duty and commitment of this responsibility should be displayed in both words and actions.

The SRVFPD is an all-risk emergency response agency, public services provided within the service area include; fire, rescue and emergency medical services, 911 communication center, code compliance activities within the built environment, and a notable Community Emergency Response Team program. The SRVFPD is a critical resource agency for response to disasters within the service area. A more comprehensive and current policy for emergency management activities will foster a cohesive strategy among the communities served. The deliverable is

intended to promote the five goals outlined in the United States Administration Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2010-2014 (United States Fire Administration, 2010) in direct alignment with the first three goals that identify the need for local government actions to improve prevention, mitigation, planning and preparedness, response and recovery capabilities.

Literature Review

In conducting research for this project, a number of documents that referenced the current emergency management environment were utilized. These documents provided diverse perspectives and subject matter recommendations based on credible historical experience.

The Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services, introduces the operational area Emergency Operations Center within the content of the Contra Costa Operational Area-Emergency Operations Plan (Contra Costa County, 2011) as, "a location from which centralized emergency management can be performed during a major emergency or disaster. This facilitates a coordinated response by the Director of Emergency Services, Emergency Management Staff and representatives from organizations who are assigned emergency management responsibilities. The level of Emergency Operations Center staffing will vary with the specific emergency situation" (p.25).

As part of the research, an article entitled, *The Emergency Operations Center: A Vital Preparedness Tool* was found in an issue of *Fire Engineering*. The author, William Shouldis is identified as a retired deputy chief from the Philadelphia Fire Department with more than 34 years experience. Shouldis discussed that the foundational elements of community risk reduction are applicable to any community, large or small. He stated that, "The ability of a community to acquire and allocate necessary resources hinges on being prepared" (p.71). The author summarized the purpose of the Emergency Operations Center is to ensure that departmental

response capabilities are maintained and authoritative information is disseminated to the general public, "Capturing important incident related information at an Emergency Operations Center will provide senior officials with data to set strategic direction, establish priorities, allocate resources and, under extreme circumstances, declare a disaster" (p.71).

In a publication directed toward the composition of an Emergency Operations Center, Furey (2009) describes the initial process is dictated by asking two basic questions, "Why do we need one?" and "When will it be activated"(p.112). The author discussed the initial process of designing an Emergency Operations Center by identifying predictable events, the potential extent of these events and the identification of the resources that will be required to manage them. The author further states that regardless of the determined size there are universal concerns when establishing and planning an Emergency Operations Center that include space for all necessary agency representatives, mechanism for information management, building security, building construction, sufficient room for all management and support staff, redundancy in critical components and monitoring of heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Furey recognized that Emergency Operations Centers have been established historically for several decades, however emergency response agencies are now more aware of the efficiencies of incident management systems and the tools required to effectively manage. Furthermore, the author stated that the current Emergency Operations Center components are widely diverse and varied similar to the current "all risk" emergency response incidents faced by the fire service today.

Similar to any continuous improvement process; learning from experience is critical to future success. In an article focused on lessons learned, Paros (2010) analyzed Emergency Operations Centers and the necessity of their information technology support based on after-action reports of dissimilar incident types. Paros identifies the ever growing reliance on worldwide web access,

media, software and cyber communication. The article explains the value of these tools and enabling emergency managers to adjust staffing and planning efforts based on changing situations that are obtained in live reports posted on message boards. Based on lessons learned and documented by emergency responders, the author warns that the technology needs can overwhelm IT staff in both use and support of applications and further states the importance to appropriately include adequate IT staffing criteria within planning efforts. The author invites the reader to learn from documented experiences and to seek additional information on after-action reports at Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov); a national online network of lessons learned, best-practices, and innovative ideas established for the U.S. homeland-security and emergency-response communities.

An article in the "International Journal of Emergency Management" is described as the results of the author's extensive research during an assignment as a consultant to the Government of Rajasthan state in India to design Emergency Operations Center's for district level activations. The author, Gupta (2010) shares the research methodology and experiences as well as the "best practices" of the resulting effort in design and implementation of Emergency Operations Center's under resource constraints. Gupta outlines the role of the district Emergency Operations Center, within eight criteria. The eight criteria in summary include;

1. Planning, response and recovery
2. To pull together people and resources to handle emergencies outside the ability of a single department
3. Provide management through centralized, coordinated efforts of government officials, response agencies and community volunteers by establishing priorities
4. Provide a means of centralizing and managing communications and information

5. To identify resources and trained personnel to handle sudden catastrophe but also creeping disasters
6. Ensure regular training and exercise will be conducted
7. Provide for documentation management and safeguard
8. Identify an alternate Emergency Operations Center, backup power and communication equipment to ensure continued operations (p. 225)

In a publication provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Federal Emergency Management Agency, n.d.), the four phases of emergency management are identified as; 1. Mitigation, 2. Preparedness, 3. Response, 4. Recovery. The description of the phase of recovery is stated as, “rebuilding communities so that individuals, businesses, and governments can function on their own, return to normal life, and protect against future hazards.” Furthermore, the primary responsibility of recovery from an emergency or disaster is placed on the local government with the caveat that if a Presidential Declaration was received that there are a number of federal assistance programs available under the Stafford Act. Some types of assistance described in the publication included; the repair of public infrastructure, implementation of mitigation measures, individual housing and medical expense support and loans for small businesses and individuals.

In a recent guide to local government, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2010) developed an index to information contained within the National Response Framework core document specifically designed for local government agencies involved in response and short-term recover actions to disasters and emergencies in the United States. The guide stated that all communities have two basic responsibilities’;

"(1) follow the preparedness cycle to plan, organize, train, equip, exercise, and evaluate, in order to strengthen resources and build capabilities in a constant process of preparedness; and (2) conduct an informed response to incidents, by deploying the right personnel and resources, with the right training, as part of a single incident management structure, while remaining flexible and adaptable in order to tailor responses to the particular needs of the incident." (p.3)

On September 29, 2006 the Governor of California approved Assembly Bill No. 2140 (California Assembly Bill, 2006). This act added language to the California Government Code Sections 8685.9 and 65302.6 related to local disaster planning and maximum reimbursement of eligible costs connected with certain events. The Legislative Counsel's Digest for the assembly bill discusses that the California Disaster Assistance Act limits the reimbursement of costs to a maximum of not more than 75%. The result of the bill increased the state share of local cost with the condition that the local agency must be within a city, county or city and county that has adopted a local hazard mitigation plan in accordance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as part of the safety element of its general plan. In which case, the state share of local cost shall be up to 100%.

In a recent standardized letter to local government, the California Emergency Management Agency (California Emergency Management Agency, 2011) provides guidance to local agency's in order to qualify for the increased state share provided in the law based on the passing of California Assembly Bill No. 2140 which became effective on January 1, 2007. The letter affirms that compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140 is optional and does not guarantee additional funding from the California Disaster Assistance Act. The letter specifies that required documentation must be filed with the California Emergency Management Agency,

Hazard Mitigation Planning Division in order to be considered eligible for the increased public assistance reimbursement. The documentation required to be on file includes a copy of the Resolution of Adoption that demonstrates a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which has been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has been incorporated into the safety element of the general plan. In addition, documentation is required to verify that there are either no significant changes since the adoption of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan or significant changes are documented and in compliance with Government Code §65302.6(a).

The researcher reviewed the most current national reference developed by the United States Fire Administration that outlines the strategic goals of the agency. The United States Fire Administration Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2010-2014 (United States Fire Administration, 2010) is a key document that suggested the need for a national cohesive strategy among all levels of government. The Strategic Plan outlined five goals, the first three goals implied a direct reliance on local government actions. The three goals are interpreted as interdependent combining the need to reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation, improve local planning and preparedness and to assist emergency responders improve response and recovery from all hazards.

In summary, the literature revealed applicable information with common themes. Research from varied sources identified generic, innovative and essential components of an Emergency Operations Center. Literature sources confirm a common global need for public service infrastructure to anticipate and prepare for potential hazards in a manner that is adaptable, responsible and coordinated.

Procedures

The Research Method

The action research methodology will be utilized for this applied research project through a combination of literary reviews of credible journals, governmental guidelines, related law and interviews from emergency management practitioners across various levels of government.

Participants

The researcher interviewed three groups of government officials responsible for emergency management functions as part of this applied research paper. One group was representative emergency managers from the three municipal governments within the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District service area. The second group was a representative from the California Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Division. The third group was directed toward a representative sample of fire service personnel with emergency management responsibilities within a fire service organization that serves multiple municipalities and has similar governing authority.

The purpose of these interviews was to compare and analyze like services of Emergency Operations Center's within the service area and to provide perspective of common practices and expectations among representatives of the emergency management community within California. Observations of interview participants, documented in Appendix H, was studied to obtain a broad understanding of emergency management expectations, responsibilities and roles and insight to reasonable levels of service during a major emergency incident. The emergency manager group participants interviewed was G. Gilbert, Town of Danville (Personal Communication, January 9, 2012), R. Riordan, City of San Ramon (Personal Communication, January 10, 2012) and R. Kovar, Contra Costa County (Personal Communication, January 12,

2012). Interview notes based on the personal communication between the researcher and local emergency managers was outlined in Appendix D. The California Emergency Management Representative Interview Notes (Appendix E) were based on the personal communication with the researcher. The participant interviewed was J.Childress-Byer, a representative of the Hazard Mitigation Division within the California Emergency Management Agency (Personal Communication, January 10, 2012). Fire service participants interviewed were provided in the interview notes titled, Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Appendix F).

Interview Groups

The emergency manager group interview questions were called the Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire (Appendix A) and were presented to each current designated emergency manager of the three municipal governments served by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District. These participants were selected based on the researchers' goal to meet service level expectations, promote effective operations and provide a cohesive and coordinated framework within the service area.

The second interview group was conducted with a state level government official with knowledge of statewide local government hazard mitigation efforts and eligibility requirements for disaster reimbursement. In California, local governments share costs with the State and Federal government to assist in restoring communities to pre-existing conditions. However, the percent of reimbursement can vary. Therefore, surveying the emergency managers regarding current emergency management policies provided a direct comparison with current state law to identify the percent of reimbursement that can be expected when a disaster is appropriately declared.

The third interview group was conducted with five fire officials that present a statewide, representative sample of agencies that have similar service area responsibilities as compared to the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District. The service area varied among the participants, all had jurisdictional responsibility within the unincorporated county area and the number of cities served varied from 1 to 22. While agency size varied, the interview questions provided necessary perspective of how an effective emergency management system may be achieved. Finally, these participants were selected based on their individual experience within an emergency management command position with the additional challenge of providing continuity of services within the agency and support to multiple Emergency Operations Center' within the service area. The interview questions identified comparable emergency management organizational structures and levels of service related to Emergency Operations Center activations and hazard mitigation planning.

Interview Questions

The interview questions were developed to assist the researcher in identifying successful practices and comparable data to support a functional design of an emergency management system that is structured in a manner to facilitate a measureable difference in a community's risk from anticipated hazards.

The first set of questions , those provided to emergency managers within the service area of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, sought to gain a current perspective of established policies, expectations of service levels and identify policy level components to achieve a cohesive and functional emergency management strategy. These interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

The second set of questions; those provided to a representative of the California Emergency Management agency were designed to garner perspective on related laws in order to determine whether there is conflicting goals among the municipal governments served, as related to available disaster reimbursement programs. Questions were designed to gauge expected levels of shared costs between local, state and federal governments when a disaster is declared. In addition, statewide perspective was gained related to local government actions to comply with state law that would increase the percent of reimbursement and eligibility of hazard mitigation grants. These interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

The third set of questions, solicited agency-specific organizational structure of Emergency Operations Center's of fire agencies with like governmental authority. For example, one question asked whether the agency had an independent Emergency Operations Center and another question asked if the agency committed resources to other Emergency Operations Center's that are within the service area. Questions were gauged to provide perspective on elements that contribute to a functional and effective emergency management system based on related experience. These interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Relative to the value and benefit of emergency management services in relation to community risk reduction, questions sought to provide insight to comparative goals of local government agency's plans for local hazard mitigation and creating disaster resilient communities. Each participant of each of the three groups was asked, "On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; how would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?"

Limitations

Because the research methodology selected (interviews) was intended to provide comparisons of emergency management system components that promote effectiveness and functionality, every effort was made to include participants with applicable job knowledge, experience and familiarity with current related policy and procedures of their governmental agency. However, while the participants had similar assigned responsibilities during emergency management activities, the methodology was limited by varying personal experience within Emergency Operations Center's that are fully activated during disaster events. Additionally, portions of the interview questions relied to a certain degree on individual perspective of success. Therefore, these perspectives may have been influenced by varying factors of experience and studied practices but are accepted as provided with the intention of honesty and relative application within similar emergency management responsibilities.

Results

The first research question asked: (a) what components are necessary in order to meet California State law and Federal law to allow the District to be in compliance for maximum reimbursement when a disaster is appropriately declared? The research confirmed that in order to qualify for maximum reimbursement for certain disaster recovery projects funded with California Disaster Assistance Act certain documentation must be filed with the California Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Planning Division. Required documentation must include a certified copy of the Resolution of Adoption by Contra Costa County that demonstrates that a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency has been incorporated in whole or by reference into the safety element of the general plan. These eligibility requirements have been recently outlined in a

standardized letter to local governments, dated October 20, 2011, from the California Emergency Management Agency (California Emergency Management Agency, 2011). Several of the questions in the Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire found in Appendix A were structured to identify the current policy for emergency management activities. The responses from the participants were documented in Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix D). The Emergency Manager Interview Notes assessed the current policy for each municipality and identified the ultimate goal as it relates to proposed actions to comply with requirements to qualify for maximum reimbursement of disaster assistance recovery funds in accordance with state law and as set forth by California Assembly Bill No. 2140 (California Assembly Bill, 2006).

The California Emergency Management Agency Questionnaire (Appendix B) provided insight to the expected level of reimbursement of disaster assistance recovery funds as compared to whether a local agency had no emergency management system plans in place to a local agency that was in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140 (2006). The response from the participant documented in the California Emergency Management Agency Interview Notes (Appendix E) as a result of the question asked; how many of the 58 counties in California are in compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140, provides insight to a statewide perspective. The response indicates a low percentage of eligible local agencies have completed the compliance process. The numbers provided show that 3-4 county's and 15-20 city's are currently in compliance. The participant provides further information to clarify what options the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District would have to be eligible for maximum level of reimbursement; by either being an integrated partner with a compliant municipal government agency, an integrated partner with a group of allied agencies, such as all of the nine fire

protection districts within Contra Costa County or as a stand-alone agency. The participant explains that there are advantages and disadvantages to be considered; the process to be compliant with California Assembly Bill No. 2140 requires the development of a local hazard mitigation plan that meets federal guidelines of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The advantages and disadvantages of each option are considerate of a cost and benefit analysis by each local agency. The participant advised that there are advantages to a collaborative effort however as a partner, each individual agency is not able to apply for reimbursement funds or hazard mitigation programs as a stand-alone applicant. As a result the disaster assistance needs of the SRVFPD may not be a priority among the partner agencies as a whole.

The Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix D) revealed that each of the three municipal governments and the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District are an integrated partner with the current Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan (Contra Costa County, 2011) that was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in June 2011. Additional information provided that the Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently in the review and approval process of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the ultimate goal is to ensure compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140 (Appendix D).

The second research question asked; what required components does the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD) currently have in place? The fifth question in the Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire (Appendix A) asked: are there any specific resource needs that you require the District to provide during an activation of your jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center? The results summarized in the Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire (Appendix D) show that the expected levels of staffing resources are essentially the same among the three municipal governments within the SRVFPD; each emergency manager explained that a

representative from the District would be expected to be assigned to the Fire and Rescue Branch of the Operations Section during an activation of their Emergency Operations Center. The third question in the Emergency Management Interview Questionnaire asked; what is the primary reason the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent chose the SRVFPD Administrative Building for the location of their agency's primary Emergency Operations Center? This question was asked to two of the three participants based on the determination that both of their jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center's would be located in the SRVFPD Administrative Building. The responses identified that the primary reasons included the expectation that the design of the facility as supported by an emergency power back-up system and the inherent staffing from the SRVFPD personnel would provide for 24-hour operations and that a collaborative effort would promote a more efficient use of resources between the three primary agencies that would be located in the SRVFPD Administrative Building during a local disaster. In general terms, the results provide the level of service and the staffing and equipment resources desired in order to be coordinated with the emergency operations planning efforts of the three municipal governments served by the SRVFPD as noted in the Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix E).

The third research question asked; what Emergency Operations components are other fire agencies of similar authority providing? Several of the questions found in the Fire District Representative Questionnaire (Appendix C) provide a level of comparison of emergency management system organizational structure, expected levels of service and insight to commitment of resources. The questions assessed whether there were similarities in current emergency management responsibilities and actions among the fire service representatives interviewed. As shown in Table 1. Overview of Resource Commitments, in general, all of the

fire agencies have similar service level expectations of the municipal governments served. Responses varied related to whether or not the fire agency operated an independent Emergency Operations Center. The results and findings documented in the Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Appendix F) provide a more comprehensive view based on participant responses that identify the independent Emergency Operations Center’s are designated by their agencies as a Department Emergency Operations Center and requires staffing resources similar to an Emergency Operations Center. Additionally noted in Appendix F, there are two agency’s that have co-located Emergency Operations Center’s and share the commitment of staffing resources with a partner agency. The overview of resource commitments and Emergency Operations Center components is further defined in Table 1, by establishing that all respondents answered in the same manner in regard to being part of the local hazard mitigation plan of the municipal governments served. This is generally representative of being a supporting public service provider within the context of the governing authority of the plan and the diversity of the overarching community risk efforts and integration of multiple governmental agencies.

Table 1. Overview of Resource Commitments

Fire District Representative Interview Questionnaire (FDRIQ)	Responses	FDRIQ Question #
Does your agency have an independent Emergency Operations Center?	(2) responded- yes (1) responded- no (2) reponded –Co- located with one other agency	1

Does your agency commit staff resources for any other Emergency Operations Center's in your service area?	(5) responded yes	2
Does your agency have or is it part of a local hazard mitigation plan?	(5) responded yes, all are part of a plan	3

In general, all of the literature review and interview questions asked to the three interview groups provided value and relevant information to answer the fourth research question; how can the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District best organize and document in policy the components necessary to ensure compliance with related laws and effective operations within the District Emergency Operations Center?

As discussed in the results of the first three research questions; The Fire Service Representative Interview Questionnaire (Appendix C) questions are foundationally developed to compare service levels, staff responsibilities and organizational structure. The Emergency Management Questionnaire (Appendix A) provided specific resource expectations to support the three existing Emergency Operations Center’s within the service area of the SRVFPD, which provided valuable information in the development of revisions to the current SRVFPD policy and procedures to support a cohesive and collaborative strategy within the emergency management activities. The California Emergency Management Agency Questionnaire (Appendix B) clarified optional requirements that assist the researcher in establishing the expected percentage of disaster assistance based on the setting SRVFPD goals to be in compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140 (2006) as outlined in the standardized letter from the California Emergency Management Agency (2011).

As part of each of the questionnaires'; there is one question asked of each of the participants of the three interview groups. The question can be found in Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C. The question asked; on a scale of 1 to 5; 5 being of the greatest importance; how would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operations Center as it relates to making a measureable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards? Six out of nine participants ranked the importance at 5. Most qualified the response by indicating that in order to be a functional Emergency Operations Center an absolute and critical component is having staff resources with relevant job knowledge. Gupta (2010) confirmed this priority within the eight criteria describing the necessary roles and responsibilities of an Emergency Operations Center. The Federal Emergency Management (2010) guide to local governments provided further affirmation within the description of the two basic responsibilities of local government is to deploy the right personnel with the right training.

Another interview question was presented to both the Emergency Manager group (Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire, Appendix A) and Fire District Representative group (Fire District Representative Interview Questionnaire, Appendix C) and asked; based on your training and experience; which of the following organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement in relation to your jurisdictional EOC operation- management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, finance or other? Responses varied and are documented in the Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix D) and Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Appendix F). Within both interview groups were eight participants, three participants stated *management*, two stated *planning and logistics*, one stated *finance and logistics*, one stated *all functions equal* and one stated

knowledge of situational status software. All participants' provided insight based on their training and experience. To provide additional insight of these participants and the jurisdictional area serviced; the researcher established how many emergency events resulted in the activation of their jurisdictional Emergency Operation Center within the past five years as provided and documented in Appendix F and Appendix D. The responses varied greatly, emergency managers within the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District service area stated there were no activations within the past five years. All other participant responses were between 1-20 activations in the past five years. A notable common component that provides functionality within the current environment relative to the use and reliance on information technology, Paros (2010) warns that the technology needs can overwhelm staff in both use and support of applications and it is essential to have appropriate staff, training and planning.

Pursuant to the literature review, revisions to the existing San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Operations-Policy and Procedures Emergency Operations Center (SRVFPD, 2005) were documented in Draft Revisions EOC Operations Policy and Procedures (Appendix G). Relevant to the revisions developed in the policy, Shouldis (2010) and Furey (2009) provide foundational elements toward the composition of Emergency Operations Center components The Draft Revisions EOC Operations Policy and Procedures (Appendix G) was provided to the Emergency Manager interview group participants. Participants were requested to review the policy. The Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire (Appendix A) asked; Based on the draft language of the revised District Operations Policy for Emergency Operations Center; are there any absent or unnecessary components related to an anticipated simultaneous activation of both jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center? All three participants interviewed answered that

there were no absent or unnecessary components and the responses were noted in the Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix D).

Observation of interview participants was studied to provide an understanding of government mandates, comparable public services and level of importance. The researcher observance of interview participants documented in Observations (Appendix H) confirmed that varied approaches are acceptable and desirable to meeting service needs. Furthermore, it was determined that there are no minimum state standards that are required to be eligible for assistance and cost share in the event of a properly declared disaster. This provides the local governing authority the ability to operate and function at anticipated levels of service based on the probability of limited resources. It was observed that there is a desire among various levels of government to coordinate activities and share resources for the common goal of responsible government actions. For example, most participants interviewed stated that within the designated service areas their governmental agency has partnered in the development of local hazard mitigation plans. Proven functional operations were learned and provided additional knowledge and credibility to develop revisions to the existing policy and procedure for Emergency Operations Center. Emergency managers within the service area confirmed service expectations and acknowledged support of draft policy revisions. Several of the interview participants emphasized the ability to be successful is dependent on the ability to have staffing resources with job knowledge and management directives that are timely, clear and concise. The level of importance in reducing a community's risk by having a functional Emergency Operations Center was somewhat varied based on measureable performance and outcomes but most agreed that the lack of one can put a community at a much greater risk from the event of disaster.

Discussion

The result of the Emergency Manager Interview question; has the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent ensured applicable documentation and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with state law, provided valuable insight to establish a cohesive strategy within the service area. Participants all confirmed the goal of their government agency was to be in compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140 and the eligibility requirements as outlined in the standardized letter to local government developed by the California Emergency Management Agency (2011) were stated to be in progress. Further, the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), City of San Ramon, and the Town of Danville are all documented as a planning partner within the Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Discussion with the interview participant of the California Emergency Management Agency confirmed that successful fulfillment of the eligibility requirements would qualify each properly designated agency within the Contra Costa Hazard Mitigation Plan (CCHMP) the opportunity for the maximum reimbursement from the California Disaster Assistance Fund. As a supporting agency within the three jurisdictions, and a designated part of the CCCHMP, the SRVFPD will be eligible for the increased percentage of reimbursement as set forth in California Assembly Bill No. 2140 when the process is completed. Based on the response documented in Appendix F, California Emergency Management Agency Interview Notes there are approximately 3-4 county's out of 58 in California that are currently in compliance with California Assembly Bill No. 2140. This information leads to the conclusion that if the process for Contra Costa County to become qualified is completed; that in the event of an appropriately declared disaster it is likely that the SRVFPD will be able to obtain the maximum percentage of reimbursement for additional state share for certain disaster recovery projects that are applied for under the law set

forth in California Assemble Bill No. 210 and in partnership with Contra Costa County and other designated city's and agencies within the CCHMP.

A significant research discovery was among the responses to Fire District Representative Interview Questionnaire (Appendix C), the results revealed a variety of organizational structures and resource commitments within the service area and in most instances the fire agency was either co-located with one of the government jurisdictions served or there was an independent facility designated as the Department Operations Center. The current resource commitments of the SRVFPD include a chief officer to both the City of San Ramon and the Town of Danville when the respective Emergency Operations Center is activated, the policy has no directive of any supportive functions for the Contra Costa Operational Area Emergency Operation Center (2011) or policy language to support the SRVFPD continuity of operations and services nor does it accurately reflect that both the San Ramon Emergency Operations Center and the Town of Danville primary location of the Emergency Operations Center is located within the SRVFPD Administrative Building.

Researching further in to key elements that promote functionality both the literature review and interview groups continuously highlighted the need for staffing resources to have job knowledge of their assigned role and responsibilities. Fire District Representatives within the interview group had the most recent experience within activated Emergency Operations Center's and express the solution to this circumstance is a challenge when there is continuous changes in personnel and that this issue can be even more difficult to overcome when there are not regular activations of the Emergency Operations Center. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (2010) provides national guidance in establishing the basic responsibilities for local government management and operational concepts for response and recovery within a national framework.

The literature review validated the importance for an adaptable approach to emergency management activities within an Emergency Operations Center. The success of achieving a functional Emergency Operations Center is interdependent on all phases of preparing for predictable hazards and reducing a community's risk. Lessons learned to promote a continuous improvement process of mitigation, prevention and planning efforts pre-disaster, evaluation of response and recovery actions from each disaster and cycling those lessons back into the planning and preparedness process. Paros (2010) urges emergency management practitioners to seek lessons learned and documented in after-action reports available on a national online network.

Another important aspect of the research was service level expectations of the three municipal governments served by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protections District. The Draft Revisions EOC Policy and Procedures found in Appendix G clearly identified the resource needs that are expected to be provided to each of the three municipal governments served by the District as confirmed by each of the emergency manager participant's response in the Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Appendix D). Based on the responses the SRVFPD will plan appropriately to ensure there is a person assigned to each Emergency Operations Center and qualified to the assigned Fire and Rescue Branch of the Operations Section. Furthermore, the responses from the Emergency Manager interview group participants support the draft policy as written and comment as having no absent or unnecessary components within the Draft Revisions EOC Ops Policy and Procedures (Appendix G) and supports the process for a coordinated effort in ensuring disaster recovery assistance. Identifying the resource needs of the three Emergency Operations Center's within the service area allows for the evaluation of remaining District

resources available to be committed to the continuity of SRVFPD operations and services during emergency and disaster events.

The literature suggests there are many factors that contribute to the resilience of communities and the functional components of an Emergency Operations Center. However, there are common basic principles and effective management tools that foster an effective approach to response and recovery from all threats and hazards.

In summary, by conducting research in a more broad and generic manner information obtained revealed common foundational components, organizational structure and pit falls. This provided the framework for policy and procedure revisions that are reflective of a cohesive strategy and are reasonable to achieve in the event of a major disaster. A policy and procedure that is current, adaptable and achievable is essential for the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District to effectively achieve a measureable difference from the losses associated with major disaster events.

Recommendations

The purpose of this Applied Research Paper is to recommend the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD) approve revisions documented in the Draft Revisions SRVFPD EOC- Policy and Procedures (Appendix F) that outlines the foundational elements of the SRVFPD emergency management activities to support the three Emergency Operations Center's within the service area and provide the necessary resources to effectively manage continuity of operations and services of the SRVFPD as documented in the SRVFPD Operations Policy and Procedures: Emergency Operations Center (Appendix I). As a result of the research the policy establishes the organizational structure of a Department Emergency Operations Center in addition to the commitment of a qualified staff member to the Emergency Operations Center's of

San Ramon, Danville and Contra Costa County. Based on the research the revisions recommend SRVFPD maintain a comprehensive and effective continuity planning process composed of the key elements to ensure the continuity of government and operations capabilities in order to ensure the preservation of government and establish a baseline of preparedness for predictable hazards. The recommended policy further defined the primary Department Operations Center to be located in the SRVFPD Administrative Building. The SRVFPD Department Operations Center will serve a 24-hour facility, managing SRVFPD disaster response, continuity of government and continuity of operations. The purpose of the SRVFPD Department Operations Center is to establish a functional facility to centralized management of information, decision making, resource allocation and logistical support for both continuity of government and continuity of operations. The SRVFPD Department Operations Center will ensure field response coordination and communication links exist among the emergency response agencies and government agencies within the service area. The primary location within the SRVFPD Administrative Building will provide familiar tools and layout for analyzing the situation status, establishing overall objectives and provide adequate equipment to support an adaptable operation. The SRVFPD Department Operations Center management organization is based on the Incident Command System (ICS). General responsibilities for the ICS functions are, as far as possible, aligned with the current SRVFPD Management Team structure and responsibilities. The intent is to have qualified people inclusive of administrative staff and non-emergency personnel with relevant job knowledge in pre-designated positions and sections within management organization. Chief Officers will be responsible for the positions of; Incident Commander, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, Information Officer and Operations Chief. The Fire Marshal will be responsible for the positions of; Planning Section Chief and Resource Status.

Assistant Chief of Support Services will be responsible for the positions of; Logistics Chief, Situation Unit Leader and IT Tech Specialist. The Administrative Services Manager will be responsible for the position of; Finance Section Chief. The policy recommends the Department Operations Center management structure be designed to promote the use of staff members into ICS positions that have similar duties as compared to their normal work day. This is intended to facilitate effectiveness, efficiency and support a concurrent management objective to provide continuity of government.

There are many successful emergency management components that are incorporated into the recommended SRVFPD Operations Policy and Procedure-Emergency Operations Center (Appendix I). The policy is set forth to establish a cohesive strategy among the three municipal governmental agencies served in order to maintain a comprehensive and effective emergency management system that establishes a baseline of preparedness for anticipated events of disaster and promotes operational readiness and functionality within an adaptable and flexible management structure.

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Appendix A

Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire

Date:

Jurisdiction:

Person Interviewed:

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years?

Question 1.

Has the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent ensured applicable documentation and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with state law

Question 2.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Question 3.

What is the primary reason the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent chose the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Administrative Building for the location of the primary Emergency Operations Center?

Question 4.

Based on the draft language of the revised District Operations Policy for Emergency Operations Center; Are there any absent or unnecessary components related to an anticipated simultaneous activation of both jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Appendix A

Emergency Manager Interview Questionnaire (Cont.)

Question 5.

Are there any specific resource needs that you require the District to provide during a activation of your jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Question 6.

Based on your training and experience as an emergency manager; Which of the followings organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement? Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other

Appendix B

California Emergency Management Agency Questionnaire

Date:

Person Interviewed:

Question 1.

If a local agency had no hazard mitigation plan in place or were not in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140; would they be eligible for 75% reimbursement of state share eligible costs?

Question 2.

How many of the 58 counties in California are in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140?

Question 3.

Does the State have expectations for special districts serving more than one municipal government?

Question 4.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Appendix C

Fire District Representative Interview Questionnaire

Date:

Jurisdiction:

Person Interviewed:

Service Area:

EOC Position:

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years?

Question 1.

Does your agency have an independent Emergency Operations Center?

Question 2.

Does your agency commit staff resources for any other Emergency Operations Center's in your service area?

Question 3.

Does your agency have or is it part of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Question 4.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Appendix C

Fire District Representative Interview Questionnaire (Cont.)

Question 5.

Based on your training and experience working in an EOC; which of the following organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement in relation to promoting a functional EOC operation, **Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other**

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes

Date: January 10, 2012

Personal Communication

Jurisdiction: Town of Danville

Person Interviewed: Greg Gilbert, Emergency Manager

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years? None

1. Has the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent met requirements to be in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140?

Response: Yes. Currently we are incorporating the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP) into the Safety Element of the General Plan, concurrently as we update the General Plan. The council adopted the LHMP in June 2011, the plan was developed as part of the development of the Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The process used was designed to meet or exceed minimum standards and align with state and federal law. Additionally both the state and federal government encourage the development of LHMP's because they are required in order to obtain disaster assistance funds and federal grants.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Response: 5. Based on the four phase of emergency management; preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. Having a formal Emergency Operation process;

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

Ensures the community has staff members responsible for a certain role in the EOC in addition to their day to day responsibilities. The role is generally inclusive between their input in the 4 phases and their primary responsibilities. For example, staff members assigned to the Planning Department are generally assigned to the EOC Planning Section. Finance Department assigned to Finance Section. This provides a local and working knowledge of the community and the inter-relationship. It is important to assign staff with related knowledge. Drills reinforce process. The desired outcome is to have a disaster resilience community.

3. What is the primary reason the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent chose the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Administrative Building for the location of their primary Emergency Operations Center?

Response: Three primary reasons; 1. 24 hour power with backup power supply., 2. Located outside city limits and general disaster zone, 3. Support from Fire District to maintain the Emergency Operation Center.

4. Based on the draft language of the revised District Operations Policy for Emergency Operations Center; Are there any absent or unnecessary components related to an anticipated simultaneous activation of both jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Response: No. Any emergency policy needs to be a living document. Needs to be a flexible policy with the understanding that emergencies know no boundaries.

5. Are there any specific resource needs that you require the District to provide during an activation of your jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

Response: It is expected that the building will have 24 hour power. There is a representative assigned to the Fire and Rescue Branch of Operations to liaison with the Fire District and assist in coordinating Operations Section activities.

6. Based on your training and experience as an emergency manager; which of the following organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement in relation to your jurisdictional EOC operation, **Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other**

Response: Planning. Planning goes to all four phases of emergency management. It is important for to plan for response of ALL agencies. Planning may involve debris management or returning continuity of government. Responsible for setting objectives, research and identifying the most critical needs.

2nd priority would be logistics. Pre identify equipment and supply needs prior to anticipated events.

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

Date: January 10, 2012

Personal Communication

Jurisdiction: City of San Ramon

Person Interviewed: Ray Riordan, Emergency Manager

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years? None

1. Has the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent met requirements to be in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140?

Response: In 1987 the jurisdiction passed an ordinance that established a disaster council through this effort it became a federal registered disaster program. At this time the jurisdiction is not in compliance with AB 2140 but is in the process to become compliant in conjunction with the Contra County process.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Response: 3.5-4. I would rank the importance of a functional EOC.

5, I would rank having a common action plan and the ability to communicate and work effectively together.

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

3. What is the primary reason the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent chose the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Administrative Building for the location of their primary Emergency Operations Center?

Response: As I understand, there were three reasons; 1. Assessment of existing resources., 2. To more effectively use resources between the three primary agencies that would be located in the building during a local disaster. 3. The Citizen Corps Council established among the two municipalities', the Fire District and the school district solidified the collaboration and effective use of resources and team commitment based on that emergencies do not know political boundaries.

4. Based on the draft language of the revised District Operations Policy for Emergency Operations Center; Are there any absent or unnecessary components related to an anticipated simultaneous activation of both jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Response: No. Based in terms of our ability to operate independently and collaboratively.

5. Are there any specific resource needs that you require the District to provide during an activation of your jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Response: First, a representative from the Fire District to the EOC I represent; with the authority to make decisions and the ability to monitor the Fire District activities. Second, operational equipment and functionality of the facility.

6. Based on your training and experience as an emergency manager; which of the following organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement in relation to

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

your jurisdictional EOC operation, **Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other**

Response: Planning and logistics are the primary functions for successful operations. As an example, common terminology to describe the complexity of the equipment and personnel needed is essential. For predictable events these items can be pre-identified. Management of an EOC is generally existing managers that know how to make a decision. Legal council needs to understand more than the local environment it is necessary to have state and federal knowledge.

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

Date: January 12, 2012

Jurisdiction: Contra Costa County

Person Interviewed: Rick Kovar, Emergency Manager

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years? None

1. Has the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent met requirements to be in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140?

Response. The County has recently updated the LHMP, it was approved by the Board of Supervisors in June and has a preapproval from FEMA.

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to a community's ability to reduce risk and prevent loss from potential hazards

Response: Qualified 5. If you have an active EOC that participates in preparedness and planning it will promote success to reduce the timeframe and assist recovery to pre-existing conditions.

3. (Not for County). What is the primary reason the governmental body of the jurisdiction you represent chose the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District Administrative Building for the location of the primary Emergency Operations Center?

4. Based on the draft language of the revised District Operations Policy for Emergency Operations Center; Are there any absent or unnecessary components related to an anticipated simultaneous activation of both jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Appendix D

Emergency Manager Interview Notes (Cont.)

Response: No. It is important to have a document that is flexible and generic. I advocate the basics and fundamentals. Stay out of the weeds in these types of plans.

5. Are there any specific resource needs that you require the District to provide during a activation of your jurisdictional Emergency Operations Center?

Response: The Fire Branch would be staffed by the County fire department but we may request a liaison if the incident is in your service area to provide better communication between our agencies.

Based on your training and experience as an emergency manager; Which of the followings organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement? Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other

Response: Management. Assigned personnel often change and may be detached from the overall program. Second, Operations; I would prioritize more interactive exercises.

Appendix E

California Emergency Management Agency Interview Notes

Date: January 9, 2012

Personal Communication

Person Interviewed: Jami Childress-Byers, Emergency Services Coordinator of the Hazard

Mitigation Division

1. If a local agency had no hazard mitigation plan in place or were not in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140; would they be eligible for 75% reimbursement of state share eligible costs?

Response: Yes. The State Hazard Mitigation Plan makes a local government agency eligible for disaster funds. The disaster funds are federal dollars. The remaining 25% of cost is also an additional category that is shared between the State and local government. As a result and in general when a major disaster is declared by the State the local government agency is eligible for all categories A-G including debris removal, mitigation, repair of utilities, bridges, buildings, and individual assistance. The local government cost is 6.25% of the 100% eligible costs. This includes special districts, cities, counties and non-profit organizations are eligible for public assistance. Under the Federal Stafford Act Section 406, a project worksheet can be submitted for damaged facilities to repair back to pre-disaster condition and may request reimbursement costs to bring the new construction up to current codes and standards. There is also a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) that is triggered based on an event, the dollar amount is determined 6-12 months after the event by FEMA. The grant money can be 7.5%-15% provided to a state if the state has a Standard Hazard Mitigation Plans. There are also provisions that increase that amount to a guaranteed 20% if the state has an Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation

Appendix E

California Emergency Management Agency Interview Notes (Cont.)

Plan which is above and beyond the standard. However these funds are only available to a local government agency that has a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) approved by FEMA. There are several ways to qualify as having a LHMP; as a stand alone special district, in combination with other special districts, as part of the county or city LHMP. The disadvantage of being a part of a LHMP is that your project may not be a priority among the group of partners.

2. How many of the 58 counties in California are in compliance with California Assembly Bill 2140?

Response: There are very few. There are more cities than counties; approximately 15-20 cities and 3-4 counties are currently in compliance. The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 was intended to change thinking from recovery to pre-planning. By 2005 LHMP started coming into Cal EMA for approval but there were no guidelines or standards at that time. In 2008, FEMA provide a guidance tool for pre-planning. LHMP have a life cycle of five years and as a result, the second generation of LHMP have been coming in primarily between 2010 - 2011 however they are generally updated plans from the first generation that was developed without guidelines so as a result the plans are sub-standard to current federal guidelines.

3. Does the State have expectations for special districts serving more than one municipal government?

Response: Yes. There is an expectation that you will look at reducing risk, saving lives and creating resiliency that focuses on life safety and protecting the environment.

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation

Appendix E

California Emergency Management Agency Interview Notes (Cont.)

Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Response: 3. The Emergency Operations Center is focused on immediate need during a disaster. There are many other pieces that are necessary to promote long term recovery. Public education and CERT training are an example that is a weakness in general. The problem is mitigation is not a common term among the public. The public places a significant reliance on government assistance and needs to answer the question; how can I be safe in the next event.

Appendix F

Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary

Persons Interviewed between January 9 and January 12, 2012:

Mike LaPlant, Assistant Chief, Ventura County Fire Protection District, Camarillo, CA

Mike Boyle, Division Chief, Orange County Fire Authority, Irvine, CA

Eric Nickel, Deputy Chief, Novato Fire Protection District, Novato, CA

Doug Williams, Fire Chief, Rincon Valley Fire Protection District, Windsor, CA

David Lord, Deputy Chief, Alameda County Fire Department, San Leandro, CA

Service Area:

Notes provided to compare service areas:
6 cities, all of the unincorporated area of the county served
4 cities, all of the unincorporated area of the county served
22 cities, all of the unincorporated area of the county served
1 city, a portion of the unincorporated area of the county served
1 city, a portion of the unincorporated area of the county served

EOC Position generally assigned:

Notes provided to compare related experience:
Fire/Rescue Branch, Operational Area Coordinator
Command Staff
Fire/Rescue Branch Manager, Operations Chief, EOC Deputy Commander
Fire Branch Manager
Fire/Rescue Branch Manager, DOC Duty Chief

Appendix F

Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Cont.)

Number of EOC activations in the service area due to an emergency within the past 5 years?

Notes provide to compare activity within the service area:
1-2 activations
20 or more activations
15 or more activations
1 activation
4 activations

Question 1.

Does your agency have an independent Emergency Operations Center?

Notes provided to compare level of resource commitment and organizational structure:
We have an independent Department Operations Center
We have an independent Department Operations Center
We are co-located with one city, share staff resources
We are co-located with one city, share staff resources
No.

Appendix F

Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Cont.)

Question 2.

Does your agency commit staff resources for any other Emergency Operations Center's in your service area?

Notes:
Yes. The District staffs the Operational Area Coordinator function and supports Fire/Rescue Branch
Yes. Generally the County Fire agency provides fire service resources to the County EOC however, in some cases the District will provide staffing resources when requested.
Yes, approximately 5 positions are committed to the Operational Area/County EOC
Yes. Fire Branch of the the County EOC
Yes. There is a challenge with assigning the appropriate person to City EOC's when resources are scarce. This may not meet the City's expectations of service in some instances. The District will prioritize the level of authority/decision making abilities to the City's with the most impact from the disaster. It is desirable to have a Chief Officer representing the District in the activated EOC's when possible.

Question 3.

Does your agency have or is it part of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Appendix F

Fire District Representative Interview Notes and Results Summary (Cont.)

Notes:
Yes. The District HMP is part of the County document. We are also part of each city's local hazard mitigation plan which is a challenge for the District to coordinate plans with all of the service area because they are not developed collaboratively.
Yes. Part of the County LHMP
Yes. Part of the County LHMP
Yes. Part of both the City and County LHMP's
Yes. Part of both the City and County LHMP's

Question 4.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being of greatest importance; How would you rate the level of importance for local government to be capable of operating a functional Emergency Operation Center as it relates to making a measurable difference in a community's ability to reduce risk, reduce loss and assist recovery from predictable hazards?

Notes:
5. Very important
4. From a cradle to grave perspective of incident management there is a benefit when an agency can coordinate resources and take advantage of both internal and external resources. We pay the County a small fee to handle any documentation or required submittal for disaster assistance and recovery assistance.
5.

Depends. Lack of a local functional EOC can make a disaster 10 times worse, as I have recently experienced on an assignment of a severe weather event. Having a plan does not matter if you do not have the people to carry it out. It is a vital tool and reduces recovery time if the plan is user friendly, has measureable mitigation points and knowledgeable staffing to carry out the plan. The plan is only as good as the relevance, currency and if it is used by staff that have a clear understanding of their role. There needs to be a decision maker at the policy level and finance support.

2. Because the function of the After Action Report outcomes back into the planning process and helps to mitigate inherently as part of the bigger picture. Pre-activation in front of anticipated disasters such as severe weather does not measurably reduce risk however overtime when we turn experience back on to itself and improve there is value.

Question 5.

Based on your training and experience working in an EOC; which of the following organizational management components would you prioritize for improvement in relation to promoting a functional EOC operation, **Management, Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics, Finance or Other**

Notes:

Rate all management components equal. However, finance is important but assigned staff generally have job knowledge because it is there every day job. In contrast, planning and logistics section staff are out of their element generally. When they understand their job they do okay. You have to do a time out when people do not know there job responsibilities. Table top exercises help staff learn their roles.

Management. If an EOC manager knows their job they can direct everyone else. Plans would be second because they lead the group. We need to get ahead of the incident rapidly and develop strategies, in some instance for the next four hours. The manager will influence all others, if they provide clear direction. They need to lead beyond reactive and move into the proactive.

Finance and Logistics. As an example, if you have a county that is not affluent it is critical to have the county administrator and the finance section chief working together to support plans and logistics. I was on an assignment where the EOC was built in a flood plain and the disaster created a situation where it was inoperable. It was key to have someone in charge of the purse strings.

Management. There is weakness in the operation when there is a lot of turnover in key management positions. Second, Plans. Third, Operations. Fourth, Logistics. Although I believe that our logistics section is so effective that I move them down the list. They pre-identify many of the resource needs. Fifth, Finance/Admin. Our District actively trains twice a year.

Because EOC's do not activate frequently and people change there are challenges when we introduce new technology. There needs to be a way to take this group of people that are activated to the EOC and provide them the ability to get up to speed immediately on the technology in place at the time so they can process information effectively. Going from handwritten documentation and tracking of situation status to continuously changing software is a vulnerability to effectively function.

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure

Note: Proposed Changes are denoted as follows; deleted language is in strikeout and proposed new language is in gray highlight

INTRODUCTION

~~The Emergency Operations Center (E.O.C.) is established to facilitate a coordinated effort to mitigate an emergency of a larger nature than the normal day-to-day operation.~~

It is the policy of the District to maintain a comprehensive and effective continuity planning process composed of the key elements of Continuity of Government (COG) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) capabilities in order to ensure the preservation of government and establish a baseline of preparedness for the full range of potential emergencies.

The Department Operations Center (DOC) is a facility that serves as a 24 hour-a-day center for managing the District's disaster response, continuity of government and continuity of operations. The DOC staff members, who are given tasks in this plan, congregate in this central site to carry out and/or support the District's Disaster Plan.

DEFINITIONS

--Continuity of Government: A coordinated effort to ensure essential functions continue to be performed during a catastrophic emergency. It is the ability to carry out the District's legal

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

responsibilities. This is accomplished through succession of leadership, the pre-delegation of emergency authority and active command and control.

--Continuity of Operations: Is an effort within the Districts organizational structure to ensure the capability of maintaining the business of government under all eventualities. This is accomplished through comprehensive plans and procedures, personnel, resources and communications.

--Department Operations Center: The Department Operations Center is the facility and command and control structure to support the continuity planning process and coordinate the supportive roles and responsibilities to the primary Emergency Operation Centers of ; the Town of Danville, City of San Ramon and the Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services.

POLICY

~~Following a major incident, the Fire District, the Town of Danville, or the City of San Ramon can activate the E.O.C. Depending on the nature of the emergency, this can consist of a town or city official going to their proscribed post, to the other extreme of a full scale activation involving the entire management staffs.~~

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

~~It is essential that if any significant expenditures are to be incurred, a town or city official, the Governor, or the President of the United States declare that a STATE OF EMERGENCY exists.~~

~~This must specifically include the geographic area of the incident and contain the type of incident.~~

~~The Town of Danville and the City of San Ramon have an order of succession to follow to declare an emergency, starting with the Mayor and resorting to any sworn police officer. By adhering to this system, the expenses incurred will be reimbursed to the agency that ordered the service or materials. If this is not accomplished, the entire cost remains with the ordering party.~~

~~The Town of Danville's E.O.C. is located in the Station 31 Day Room. There are posted diagrams for its set up. Access to the EOC, once activation has occurred, must be controlled to prevent unnecessary personnel from interfering in a very important function and to keep tight control on what equipment and materials are ordered.~~

~~The City of San Ramon E.O.C. is located in the Board of Director's Room. An alternative site is the City Hall Council Chambers. Again, access is necessarily controlled, however in the case the alternative site is used (City Hall), the security is their responsibility.~~

~~It is the Fire District's policy that we will commit whatever resources are at our disposal to maximize the effectiveness of the E.O.C. and to mitigate any emergency that may occur. All Chief Officers are trained in the operation of either E.O.C. and have at their disposal the necessary~~

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

~~equipment to accomplish this task. A Chief Officer will be the Fire District representative at the E.O.C.(s). The function of the fire representative will be to manage information between the EOC and the District's Emergency Communications Center (ECC).~~

~~The E.O.C.s are equipped with telephones at each essential position (3-digit numbers). These allow communication between the E.O.C. group functions. A satellite telephone line is also available. Each E.O.C. has a base station type radio that allows radio communication with the Contra Costa County E.O.C. In the event the E.O.C. telephone systems are inoperable, the Communication Support Unit may be used to provide this communication. Chief Officer vehicles are also equipped with various communication devices and may also be used to fill this need.~~

~~There are a variety of resource and information binders, as well as a command box for each function, located at both E.O.C.s. The resource information includes telephone numbers, equipment & supplies, dispatch checklists, mutual aid agreements, and emergency plans. Large wall maps are also available to assist with E.O.C. operations.~~

The purpose of the DOC is to:

Establish a single site for centralized management of information, decision making, resource allocation and logistical support for incident management for both continuity of government and continuity of operations.

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

Ensure field response coordination and communications links exist among the District, other emergency response agencies and government bodies within the service area.

Provide a single location for analyzing the situation, establishing overall objectives, and providing adequate resources to meet objectives.

When requested, the District may also provide appropriate staff for the Fire and Rescue Branch of the EOC Operations Section of the Town of Danville, the City of San Ramon and/or the Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services.

DOC Primary Location

The primary Department Operations Center (DOC) is located at the District Administrative Building, 1500 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon, CA. The District Administrative Building was designed to meet the requirements of an essential services building in accordance with state law. The DOC location may be moved at the discretion of the DOC Incident Commander.

The Town of Danville EOC and the City of San Ramon EOC are also located at the District Administrative Building. EOC information and details can be found in each agency Emergency Operations Plan.

The alternate DOC location is Fire Station 31, located at 800 San Ramon Valley Blvd, Danville. The DOC location may be moved at the discretion of the DOC Incident Commander.

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

The Communications Support Vehicle 131, may be used as a mobile emergency command center or to supplement the workspace for the DOC.

DOC Management Organization

The organizational structure of the DOC is based on the Incident Command System, The command and general staff serve as the DOC management team. It is intended the DOC management team will, as far as possible, be structured utilizing the common CICCIS position identifiers. The following table provides general responsibility based on the current District Management Team.

Function	Primary District Position Responsible for Assigning and Managing Resources
Incident Commander; Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, Information Officer	District Duty Chief
Operations Section Chief Note; DOC OPS will determine staffing needs for Danville and San Ramon EOC Fire and Rescue Branch. Resources may be	District Duty Chief

combined for both EOC's.	
Planning Section Chief	Fire Prevention Division
Resource Status	Fire Prevention Division
Situation Status	Support Services
Technical Services	Support Services
Logistics Section Chief	Support Services
Finance Section Chief	Administrative Services

Interaction of the DOC and Incident Command Posts/ Field Operations

The basic concept of the Incident Command System is the ability to manage any incident regardless of complexity or type and maintain continuity of operations. During a major incident it is anticipated that resources will be scarce and insufficient to provide each significant emergency response activity with planning and logistical resources.

The DOC Operations Section Chief will be the primary communication with the Incident Commanders and operational resources in the field. The DOC OPS workstation may be located in the communications center. The DOC OPS will prioritize resource orders and equipment assigned to emergency response activities.

Appendix G

Draft Revisions to Emergency Operations Center

Operations – Policy and Procedure (Cont.)

Staging Areas may be established by the DOC OPS to enable positioning of and accounting for resources prior to field assignment.

Continuity of Government

The DOC organizational structure is designed to assign staff members to ICS positions that have primary duties within the same general area of their normal/daily work responsibility. This is intended to facilitate effectiveness, efficiency and support a concurrent management objective to provide continuity of government.

In the event of a major incident that requires DOC staffing, administrative staff members may be assigned to various DOC positions. In addition to supporting the emergency response activities.

the management objectives will include functional needs for District facilities and general business services.

Although not directly involved in DOC staffing or operation, the Board of Directors will receive regular briefings from the DOC Incident Commander that will include the progress and strategies being implemented during the DOC activation.

Workstations and Facility Layout

The DOC Logistics Section Chief will be responsible for facility layout. Based on the incident complexity, workstations within the primary DOC will be determined. It is intended, based on the organizational structure and overall continuity planning process established in this policy that administrative staff members assigned to the DOC will generally be located in their normal workstation.

Note- The Town of Danville EOC is located in the Training Classroom. The City of San Ramon EOC is located in the Boardroom.

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APPROVED:	Richard Price, Fire Chief			
ORIGIN DATE:	04/92		REVISED DATE:	10/11/2011

Appendix H

Observations

Observation of interview participants was studied to provide an understanding of government mandates, comparable public services and level of importance.

The researcher observance of interview participants confirmed that varied approaches are acceptable and desirable to meeting service needs. Furthermore, it was determined that there are no minimum state standards that are required to be eligible for assistance and cost share in the event of a properly declared disaster. This provides the local governing authority the ability to operate and function at anticipated levels of service based on probable limited resources. It was observed that there is a desire among various levels of government to coordinate activities and share resources for the common goal of responsible government actions. For example, most local government agencies within designated service areas have partnered in the development of emergency plans, hazard mitigation and preparedness from disasters. Proven functional operations were learned and provided additional knowledge and credibility in the modifications of an existing policy. Allied agencies confirmed service expectations and acknowledged support of policy modifications. Several of the interview participants emphasized the ability to be successful is dependent on the ability to have staffing resources with job knowledge and management directives that are timely, clear and concise. The level of importance in reducing a community's risk by having a functional Emergency Operations Center was somewhat varied in measureable performance and outcomes but most agreed that the lack of one can put a community at a much greater risk from the event of disaster.

Appendix I

SRVFPD Operations Policy and Procedures -Emergency Operations Center

INTRODUCTION

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Appendix I

SRVFPD Operations Policy and Procedures -Emergency Operations Center (Cont.)

roles and responsibilities to the primary Emergency Operation Centers of ; the Town of Danville, City of San Ramon and the Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services.

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Establish a single site for centralized management of information, decision making, resource allocation and logistical support for incident management for both continuity of government and continuity of operations.

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Appendix I

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Appendix I

SRVFPD Operations Policy and Procedures -Emergency Operations Center (Cont.)

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