

FINAL REPORT
CASE #1201 OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The 2001 - 2002 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury decided to review disaster recovery procedures for the Office of Emergency Services. This limited scope review was designed to evaluate mass evacuation of County facilities.

BACKGROUND:

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) is charged with the responsibility of coordinating a comprehensive disaster plan to assure the safety of county residents and adequate response of emergency personnel. The OES has disaster plans that address Acts of God, i.e. earthquakes, floods, etc.; manmade disasters, i.e. toxic spills, catastrophic multi-automobile accidents, and terrorists attacks, both foreign and domestic.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

Members of the Grand Jury reviewed, in detail, all disaster recovery material pertaining to the limited scope of our review. In addition we interviewed Mr. Ronald Baldwin, Director of OES. Finally, on May 23, 2002, we participated as observers and victims in a simulated evacuation of the County Courthouse.

FINDINGS:

- 1) The Office of Emergency Services is located on the sixth floor of the County Courthouse building. The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ is concerned that OES is located in a building which receives a disproportionate amount of fictitious threats.
- 2) The first line of alerting emergency response is by dialing 911. Currently, all outgoing calls in county facilities require dialing 9 first to get an outside line before placing calls. These facilities house critical support services and at any time during the business day are occupied by large numbers of the general community. As such, if an emergency did occur, there is a high probability that the initial emergency call may be made by a person or persons not familiar with the correct telephone protocol. The phones in these facilities do not indicate the requirement to dial 9 to get an outside line.

- 3) In the last three (3) years the number of facilities directly under the control of OES has increased from nine (9) to twenty four (24), yet the coordination of emergency evacuation is still designated to Director Ronald Baldwin, with no increase in staff.

CONCLUSION:

The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ is confident that the disaster recovery plans currently in place at OES meets or exceeds accepted Federal protocol. Further, this Grand Jury commends the Board of Supervisors and the OES for its commitment to training and education of all county employees in the area of mass emergency evacuation. The Grand Jury strongly encourages the Board of Supervisors and OES to continue their commitment to simulated emergency evacuations. The Grand Jury believes OES's evacuation plan could be easily modified to accommodate other mass civilian facilities within the county, i.e., private hospitals, shopping malls and colleges.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 4) The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ recommends that the physical location of OES headquarters meet all Federal standards concerning suitability of location. If not, the Grand Jury recommends an action plan that addresses said suitability.
- 5) The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ recommends all phones that require the caller to first press 9 to receive an outside line have emergency markings on the phone to remind callers that in case of emergency they must dial 9-911.
- 6) The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ recommends that OES be adequately staffed to meet or exceed the expectations of the Board of Supervisors, as it pertains to employee training, education, and disaster readiness.
- 7) The 2001 - 2002 SJCCGJ recommends that future Grand Juries review the Office of Emergency Services to assure compliance with the ever-changing Federal and State mandates and/or laws.

RESPONSE REQUIRED:

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05

The Office of Emergency Services shall report to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin Superior Court, in writing and within 90 days of publication of this report, the response indicates one of the following:

As to each finding in the report a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The respondent agrees with the finding.
- b. The respondent disagrees with the finding, with an explanation of the reason therefore.

As to each recommendation, a response indicating one of the following:

- a. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the action taken.
- b. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be with a time frame for implementation.
- c. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope of the analysis and a time frame not to exceed (6) six months.
- d. The recommendation will not be implemented, with an explanation therefore.