

City of Santa Rosa COPE Program Communication Planning Meeting

City of Santa Rosa General Services Building
Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Attendees

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Paul Hess	phess@srcity.org

Goal / Purpose

To develop, exercise and implement a plan that will connect neighborhoods to their COPE designated fire stations and to effectively relay disaster-related information from the fire stations to the City EOC. The goal of the first few meetings will be prioritizing tasks and developing strategies. The initial planning meetings will NOT be technical in nature, but focused on overall strategic approach.

The purpose of this meeting is to identify and outline the major work areas or issues required to complete the overall planning process. After these areas are defined, their scope and specific objectives could be developed to direct and guide the work involved.

Discussion

Notes from the previous meeting were distributed and briefly discussed. There were no changes or additions needed.

There was dialogue about how the group can decide to organize or structure the planning, establish workgroups, etc. All the issues, questions, comments from the previous meeting and input gathered via email were displayed to generate ideas on how to categorize the work to be done.

Jeff Foster led a discussion about surveying the various radio groups involved/present and displaying the results in a matrix to identify and represent areas or gaps that may need attention.

		ACS	ARES	MARA	CITY
Where we are today	Activation	X	X	X	
	Staffing	X	X	X	
	Equipment				X
	Message Protocol	X	X	X	X
	Frequency Protocol	X	Not w/City	Not w/City	
	ID and Legal Issues	X (County DES)	No city issue	No city issue	X
	Legal issues (workers comp)	X	No link to city	No link to city	X
	Coordination of Radio Ops	Primary	From ACS	From ACS	Decision Maker
	Training	SEMS / NIMS / ICS / FEMA/ message handling/ NCS	ICS / NIMS/ traffic handling / FEMA	MARA's training	SEMS & NIMS (see Paul Hess)
	Post Event issues (debriefing)	Discussion / reports at county level, some city	Event driven debriefing	Within MARA	After action / corrective action reports
Where we need to go from here.	Coordination of Radio Groups	Primary	From Fire stations to COPE and others for Comms	May provide radio ops to ACS or ARES	Decision Maker
	"X" = has their own version				

Questions were raised about the specific scope of responsibilities that the City expects from the amateur operators that would staff the communication positions at the fires stations. There was concern over whether or not they would be expected to analyze and prioritize the data that is coming in. Paul said that the basic objective of the plan is to determine how to communicate with the City - how to we get volunteers to come in and how do we get them to communicate. The goal is to simply have an operator at a desk doing communication. The information management and whether or not this is done in the EOC or by the COPE community responders will be the responsibility of the City. This group is to put together a framework for a communication system for any group to use to provide communication in an emergency.

Another component of that plan should include how to get the communications function activated at the fire stations in the event of a large disaster, such as an earthquake.

ACS will staff the County and City communications function at the EOC level. ARES will be conducting communication at the fire stations and be able to mobilize other individual operators and those from other organizations (such as MARA). MARA will make efforts to fit in where they're needed. They have many resources, including those outside the communications function. They will work with the City directly on those separate issues.

The following categories of issues were used to collect and organize issues, questions, tasks: Activation; Staffing; Resources; Frequencies; Identification & Legal Issues; and Training & Exercises. Each is reflected below with the associated comments.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Activation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic or directed? Pre-established thresholds? • Different under different circumstances? • Who announces activation? When? How what method (by phone?) • Who gets called? • Activation method (requested, convergent, 'on-ready') 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Staffing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is in each group? • Coordination of group • Hierarchy & Assignments / Functions • Staffing Assessment • Groupings • Coordination of Operators • Training • Diff between operator and information triage person (traffic generator) • List of all amateur radio ops in county • Staff Assignments
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory - quantity, location • Backup - generators, etc • Antennas • Band plan - groupings (up/down) • Allocation • Equipment (antenna drops, radios, current/future/type/training) • Comm Assets, (Repeater, simplex, contact protocol) 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Frequencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many? • Backup frequencies • Repeaters or simplex? • Admin vs. tactical frequencies to use? • Coordination with other active groups (so we don't have conflicts during an incident)
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ID & Legal Issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers Compensation coverage • Authorization for access to fire stations • Identification requirements? 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Training & Exercises</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the public • Practice • Message handling • Equipment setup / usage • Basic skill level • Scenarios • Message formats (tactical, resource, damage assessment) • Post incident requirements (document, debrief, AAR) • Validation of plan through exercises

Other issues were brought up that needed to be addressed at some point during the planning process:

- How do the communicators at the fire stations interface with the COPE community volunteers?
- COPE will be prioritizing information. How is random information (that falls outside the collection tool) that comes to the fire station get dealt with?
- What other organizations want to participate? How do we integrate them? Who do they contact?

Action Items / Next Steps:

We will need the following information:

- Frequency List
- Locations of the fire stations
- Contact info at fire station
- Leadership list for Contacts

It was agreed that the next meeting would focus on finishing the lists that were started and get to the task of developing an initial plan, even if only a “down and dirty” short-term plan.