

MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office



DATE: March 22, 2020
TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
THROUGH: Steve McHarris, Interim City Manager *Steve McHarris*
FROM: Brian Sherrard, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the basic structure and functions of the EOC and our current EOC operations. This should answer many of the questions you might have as well as assist you in reassuring our community that the City is staffed 24-7 in care of our community during this time of COVID-19 emergency response.

On March 12, 2020, the City Manager declared a local emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was ratified by the City Council on March 17. Declaration of a local emergency resulted in a partial activation of the City's EOC. On March 16, Santa Clara County's Department of Public Health issued a shelter-in-place order at which time the City moved to full activation of the EOC.

EOC Overview/Purpose

An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a central command and control facility responsible for carrying out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management functions at a strategic level during an emergency and ensuring the continuity of operation of the City organization. Our City's EOC is located at the Milpitas Police Department Building from which emergency operations are directed and coordinated. Typically, when the EOC is activated, this is where City staff and officials report to and receive information relating to an emergency or "incident".

The City's EOC is an essential element of the City's response to any emergency. It operates under standard Homeland Security/FEMA structure and reporting protocols with the City staff serving specific roles. This structure is necessary to ensure continuity of operations and continuity of government in major disasters or emergencies caused by any hazard. EOC operations require that City staff be trained under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training Program so that staff are capable of implementing all functions of standardized emergency management that is practiced across the nation, of which many of our staff are certified.

The main functions of EOC include:

- Provides direction, coordination, and support to emergency operations;
- Carries out disaster management functions at a strategic level in an emergency situation;
- Ensures the continuity of operation of a company, political subdivision or other organization;
- Collects, gathers, and analyzes data;
- Makes decisions that protect life and property;
- Maintains continuity of the organization, within the scope of applicable laws; and
- Disseminates those decisions to all concerned agencies and individuals.

The Milpitas EOC also operates under the Milpitas Municipal code, which appoints the City Manager, or his/her designee, as the Emergency Services Director in an activation. The EOC is comprised of five primary units – Command, Planning, Logistics, Operations, and Finance. Operations is further broken down into sub-units such as Public Works, Fire, and Police. Depending on the nature of the emergency event, the EOC may be activated 24 hours a day, for days, weeks or even months at a time. Due to the 24-7 nature of the EOC, and the emergency event itself, staffing roles in the EOC are staffed with two rotational-shift personnel and a back-up for each of the shifts. This allows staff periods of rest and redundancy in the event staff is unable to continue their duties.

When the EOC is activated, EOC staff coordinate with the Santa Clara County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) who coordinates with the northern California region of Cal OES. Cal OES office interacts directly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The City of Milpitas adopted procedures which may qualify us to receive emergency funding during and post disaster. This is why it is extremely important that the City document disaster-related staff time and expenditures.

Currently, the City's EOC is fully activated as a result of our Pandemic Response Plan which is being finalized and will be soon be shared with Council, but the below matrix is currently in use as a best practice. The Pandemic Response Plan Matrix is included as an attachment to this memorandum.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 incident and following Public Health guidelines, City staff is not operating out of the physical EOC location, rather it is working virtually with alternate business hours, off-site locations, and tele-working practices.

EOC Partial and Full Activation

Our Milpitas OES commenced partial activation on March 12, 2020 at which time we began weekly conference calls with the County OEM, which increased in frequency to three or more times per week, and included press releases, meetings with the Executive Leadership Team, defining of "essential services", and formation of our Pandemic Response Team.

The EOC was fully activated on March 16, 2020, upon the declaration of our City Emergency Proclamation, following the State Emergency Proclamation. This included mandatory use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all essential staff, discontinuing non-essential City services, discontinued public access to City Buildings, and teleworking for essential City staff. Due to the nature of a pandemic event, the EOC is operating virtually, with EOC staff communicating remotely via teleconferencing updates, plans and directives.

EOC Roles & Responsibilities for COVID-19 Event

The City EOC does not have specifically assigned EOC roles based on the day-to-day responsibilities of employees during the normal course of business, but rather the Office of Emergency Services works to identify specific abilities or strengths of an employee with regards to EOC functionality. Intuitively, Fire, Public Works, Finance, and Police departments always fill roles in operations for their respective roles. Care and shelter generally falls to Recreation & Community Services and Building Safety and Housing departments. Logistics might be filled by staff in any department that have had prior logistics experience.

After staff are identified for specific roles, they receive specialized emergency event training for the role in the EOC. Teleconference meetings are held with EOC staff as described above at least once a day and sometimes more frequently as needed. Each department and each section of the EOC provide reports for the group for further collaboration and action.

Role of Elected Officials (City Council)

In an emergency event, it's crucial for elected officials to maintain a strong leadership role while remaining well above the hourly and day-to-day activities of the EOC. The elected officials' role is to make policy decisions, while EOC staff make operational ones. Elected officials are most effective in an emergency when they support their EOC operational staff and are positive agents within their community. During an emergency it is important for elected officials to participate at a high level and allow the EOC staff to handle the details and day-to-day activities. The EOC staff and elected officials will typically work together on the following items:

- EOC staff provides regular updates to the entire City Council, often through "Info Memos" or "Flash Reports" so that councilmembers can stay informed and can disseminate accurate information to their constituents. City Council members may choose to share/communicate information with other public agency elected officials and community leaders and forward any new information to EOC staff as needed. Communication examples to date include ongoing direct City Manager communication to individual City Council members, Informational Memos to entire City Council, and weekly teleconference calls between City and MUSD elected and senior management.
- The EOC Public Information Officer (PIO) may request the City Council, typically the Mayor, to assist at specific times of an emergency event for communication dissemination through press releases, press conferencing, and video messaging. This person would be fully briefed and prepped by the EOC PIO officer with messages of preparedness and reassurance to the community. At present, since the City's PIO position is vacant, the City Manager's Office is using a combination of other City staff and a recently hired communications consultant team to fill this role and meet immediate communication needs. The consultant will also be assisting in refining the City's PIO employment description per prior City Council direction, and helping the City recruit a permanent PIO.
- EOC staff provides legislative recommendations to the City Council for consideration to assist in the resource and financial mitigation of the emergency for which the EOC is activated. An initial example is the Council's ratification of the City's proclamation of local state of emergency. Upcoming Council policy actions related to EOC operations and COVID-19 impacts to the Milpitas residential and business community are currently being initiated by the Council and staff, with further Council action anticipated over the coming weeks. The most recent policy action being formation of a Council Economic Development Subcommittee to explore small business loan and relief programs within the context of all of the City resource needs in light of the COVID-19 impacts to City operations and services, along with any additional requests received by the community.
- The City Council can also play a key role in advocacy for funding and other assistance at the federal, state, and regional levels. Staff will work with the City Council on any such efforts needed in related to COVID-19.

If you have any questions regarding the EOC operations during this time of EOC activation, feel free to reach out to the City Manager. The COVID-19 situation is fluid, and our planning and decision-making continues to be based on the most current information from the County Public Health Department, Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National, State, and Local authorities.

For the latest information please refer to COVID-19 updates on our City Website at:

<http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/novel-coronavirus-information-alerts-updates/>

ATTACHMENT:
CITY OF MILPITAS PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN MATRIX

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	1	2	3	4	5
	MONITORING	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	EXTREMELY HIGH
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No risk to local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low risk to local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium risk to local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High risk to local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely high risk to local population
OUTBREAK STATUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging Disease present in other locations No known cases on local population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local cases contained No outbreaks Containment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local cases increasing but still low Outbreak possible Containment shifts to Mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of infection cases increasing rapidly Outbreak likely or imminent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full blown Epidemic High # of cases of infection Increasing mortality
CITY RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan Learn about emergency threat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Communications Order supplies Proactive cleaning Proactive planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale up communications Accelerate preparation Develop ad hoc Pandemic Response Team Possible service modification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service modification Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shut down non-essential services Protective Equipment for Employees
EOC ACTIVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None Activate Pandemic Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring Review and update plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situation Room Activations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIO OES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans Section Operations Section PIO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full EOC Activation