



## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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### **San Bernardino County Exercises Readiness Plans**

Over the next few months, the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services will be hosting a series of readiness exercises. Since 2006, San Bernardino County has participated in the annual Golden Guardian Exercise, a statewide disaster preparedness program. These exercises provide first responders from local government the opportunity to see what works and what doesn't when they put their plans into action.

The exercise series will use and build upon the "ShakeOut" scenario, a 7.8 earthquake on the southern section of the San Andreas Fault. Ground motion and secondary disasters such as large fires affect San Bernardino County and the entire Southern California region. Significant damage occurs to lifelines such as electrical lines, gas and petroleum lines, telephone lines, water distribution systems, bridges, roads and highways, railroads, as well as to commercial and residential structures, and critical facilities such as hospitals.

"Exercises such as the Operational Area Golden Guardian series serve as an awareness tool for emergency management personnel within the Operational Area to explore their capabilities to mitigate, prepare, respond, and recover from potential man-made and natural disasters" stated Fire Chief Mark Hartwig. "These types of exercises reinforce positive agency collaboration while allowing participants an opportunity to gain confidence in their abilities and skills".

One important lesson already learned is that no single city or county can meet all the needs of its residents and businesses in a catastrophic situation. Yes California is the leader in developing and using seismic building codes. However, earthquakes will happen and damage will occur. There is no such thing as "earthquake proof". According to the California Emergency Management Agency, most residents of California will not be killed or injured by the next earthquake, but they will be inconvenienced by damage to freeways, utility grids, and the telephone system.

#### **Cajon Pass Tabletop Exercise**

The Cajon Pass exercise will kick off with a tour conducted by Kathleen B. Springer, Senior Curator of Geological Sciences at the San Bernardino County Museum. This dynamic presenter will help further stakeholders understanding of the geological and seismic hazards particular to the Cajon Pass. She will also address the effects of a catastrophic earthquake along the San Andreas Fault in the Cajon Pass and its effects on transportation and critical utilities.

Stakeholders are well aware of the importance of a coordinated response to a catastrophic incident impacting life safety, critical infrastructure, and the restoration of utility and transportation lifelines in the Cajon Pass. The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate the Responders Organized for Potential Emergencies (ROPE) plan that is designed to coordinate response and recovery operations for all emergency responders in the Cajon Pass

following a magnitude 7.8 earthquake. The exercise will be conducted in a workshop format in order to focus discussion on identifying gaps and updating the ROPE plan.

### **City/Town Tabletop Exercise**

This exercise represents the “next level” in the county’s Golden Guardian exercise series, and will bring together varying degrees of expertise and experience from county and city/town stakeholders to strategize, problem solve, and work together in response to a regional disaster scenario. For the first time ever, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Responders from the Operational Area (OA) and EOC responders from each of the 24 cities and towns will be co-located to engage in face-to-face incident specific problem solving. Each of the cities/towns will be represented by their Emergency Manager and EOC responders.

This exercise will explore how local jurisdiction Emergency Operations Center responders and the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center responders work collaboratively to manage and coordinate response activities within the OA.

### **Mass Care and Shelter Plan Tabletop Exercise**

During the 2003 and 2007 Wildland Fires, the County pioneered a new concept known as the Shelter Operations Compound (SHOC), co-locating a human shelter, animal shelter, Local Assistance Center (LAC), and Client Support Services in one location. Since, the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services in conjunction with other County Departments and partner agencies who are on the Mass Care and Shelter Committee, have been developing the County’s Mass Care and Shelter Plan. It is anticipated that the County can open three SHOCs simultaneously with each sheltering 3,000 people while also providing other needed services to evacuees.

The purpose of this exercise is to bring together County Departments and partnering agencies that have a role in the Mass Care and Shelter Plan’s SHOC Organizational Chart and test specific components of the Plan. Participating departments/agencies will address the staffing plan and resource request process for the SHOC.

Photos are available at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news.

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