



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

**SHERIFF-CORONER
SANDRA HUTCHENS**

August 7, 2018

Honorable Charles Margines
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury 2017-2018 report, "Can the Emergency Operations Center Survive a Catastrophic Event."

Dear Judge Margines:

In accordance with Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, enclosed please find the response to the FY 2017-2018 Orange County Grand Jury report, "Can the Emergency Operations Center Survive a Catastrophic Event." If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandra Hutchens".

Sandra Hutchens
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Grand Jury Foreperson
Members, Board of Supervisors
Frank Kim, County Executive Officer

Orange County Sheriff's Department
Response to Findings and Recommendations
2017-2018 Orange County Grand Jury Report
"Can the Emergency Operations Center Survive a Catastrophic Event?"

FINDINGS

F.1

The only access road to the Emergency Operations Center is narrow, with a number of dangerous winding turns, imperiling safe vehicle passage.

Response: *Partially agrees with the finding.*

While the main access road to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is narrow with winding turns, there have been no safety issues that have resulted during the numerous times the EOC has been utilized for drills or activated for emergency response.

F.2

The only alternative exit is an unpaved jeep trail that is narrower and more dangerous than the main access road and is unsuitable for vehicle passage.

Response: *Partially agrees with the finding.*

The alternative EOC exit is unsuitable for certain vehicles. The Sheriff's Department has several vehicles that would be able to utilize the alternate exit if necessary.

F.3

The failure to properly maintain the area around the Emergency Operations Center and eradicate the overgrowth of weeds impairs visibility and presents a major fire hazard.

Response: *Disagrees with finding.*

The Sheriff's Department currently contracts with a private vendor for weed abatement. The scope of the current contract is to clear brush 15 feet along both sides of the access road to ensure the access road remains clear. Additionally the scope includes brush clearing for 100 feet around the EOC facility and 50 feet around the helicopter pad. Attached, for reference, is the weed abatement contract and the scope of work.

F.4

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has been unable to fulfill the County's responsibility to maintain the Emergency Operations Center's access road, including weed abatement and road repairs.

Response: *Disagrees with finding.*

The weed abatement vendor performs their work twice per year. For example, in 2017 services were performed in April and December.

F.5

Office equipment, bookcases, and file cabinets are not properly secured and present a risk of injury and facility damage in a major earthquake.

Response: *Disagrees with finding.*

Office equipment, bookcases and file cabinets are properly secured.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R.1

By September 1, 2018, the County should consider assigning responsibility for maintaining the land around the Emergency Operations Center, as well as the road to the facility, to the Orange County Public Works Department, which has staff with expertise in this field. (F1, F3, F4)

Response: *This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted.*

The Sheriff's Department has responsibility for the current contract for weed abatement. Vendors for the Sheriff's Department receive an elevated background check due to the sensitive nature of law enforcement facilities. There have been no issues raised regarding the maintenance of the road.

R.2.

By December 1, 2018, the County should have plans in place to repair and widen the current access road, enhance and add turnouts, or add a new access road to provide safe travel to and from the Emergency Operations Center. (F1)

Response: *This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not reasonable.*

Funding is not available to implement this recommendation.

R.3.

By December 1, 2018, the County of Orange should have a contract in place to ensure regular weed abatement around the Emergency Operations Center and along Loma Ridge Road. (F3, F4)

Response: *This recommendation has already been implemented.*

The recommended contract already exists. A contract for weed abatement has been in place several years prior to the issuance of the 2017-18 Grand Jury Report.

R.4.

By January 1, 2019, the County of Orange and the Sheriff's Department should initiate a study regarding the ability to use the Loma Ridge Jeep Trail as an emergency exit route from the Emergency Operations Center. (F2)

Response: *This recommendation will require further analysis.*

Department staff will determine the necessity of initiating a study to utilize the Loma Ridge Jeep Trail.

R.5.

By September 1, 2018, the Orange County Sheriff's Department should ensure that all office furniture and equipment is properly secured to prevent damage or personal injury in a major earthquake. (F5)

Response: *This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted.*

The Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) disagrees with the Grand Jury's finding that office furniture and equipment was not properly secured at the time of the Emergency Operations Center Tour. From the vantage point that is shown in the photo included in the report, "Can the Emergency Operations Center Survive a Catastrophic Event?" the earthquake strapping is not visible. The Grand Jury members did not request a ladder to validate that the bookcases were strapped. Attached please find photos documenting that the bookcases are indeed strapped. Please note that the strapping has been painted to match the walls of the facility. Additionally, the entire Emergency Operations Center has recently undergone facility enhancements which have included the re-inspection for proper earthquake securing of office furniture and equipment.

There will be no additional updates on this item as we believe the issue has been adequately addressed.