

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS/EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PROGRAM

The City of Sausalito's Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program's mission is to prepare the City Government as well as the citizens of Sausalito for emergencies and disasters occurring within the City or surrounding areas that will impact our community. This article will explain what the City is doing to prepare for these dramatic events and what community members can do on their own to prepare.

The dictionary defines a disaster as a sudden calamitous event bringing great damage, loss, or destruction and an emergency as a serious situation that happens unexpectedly and demands immediate action. Disasters and emergencies involve significant risks to life, safety, and welfare. Natural disasters, such as floods, involve contaminated flood water and debris that can produce a myriad of hazards. Major fires produce smoke, toxic gases, and the possibility of structural collapse. Hazardous materials events usually involve toxic materials that can cause numerous types of health hazards. Terrorism threats can involve chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive devices. Major earthquakes can impact virtually every aspect of our society. During times of disasters and emergencies, the City of Sausalito's priorities are saving lives, protecting & restoring critical facilities (systems), reducing property damage, and protecting the environment

Since August of 2008, the City of Sausalito has totally revamped its Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program in order to best serve the community. During this time, the City created the position of Emergency Services Manager, restructured the City's Emergency Operations Center, revised the City's Emergency Operations Plans, enhanced the training City Emergency Operations Personnel receive, and increased its outreach effort to the community members.

The City of Sausalito created the position of Emergency Services Manager in order to more effectively coordinate our City's efforts in Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Operations. This position is held by a Police Sergeant and their duties include providing training to the members of the City's Emergency Operations Center, preparing training exercises and emergency operational plans, coordinate the City's training with other local, state, and federal agencies, disseminating intelligence information from Federal and State sources, equipping the Emergency Operations Center, and providing emergency preparedness information to the public.

The Emergency Operations Center's has been restructured and personnel redeployed to make it more efficient and effective during times of emergencies. Existing members of the Emergency Operations Center have been redeployed to new positions and new personnel have been assigned to the Center in order to ensure sufficient personnel are available for the proper handling of incidents.

The City of Sausalito's Emergency Operations Plan has gone through a total revision. The Plan is modeled after the County of Marin's Plan and contains updated information on disasters that range from acts of terrorism to thunderstorms. The plan was designed to be more user friendly in order to ensure a minimum of confusion when implementing plans during times of stress.

Members of the City's Emergency Operations Center are receiving on-going training regarding their roles and the proper handling of a wide range of disaster and emergencies that may occur in Sausalito. This training is being provided through live training exercises when the members handle mock emergencies as well as on line through the internet. The City is utilizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other on line sources to provide detailed, yet cost effective and time efficient, training.

One of the main goals of the Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program was to increase the dissemination of information to the public regarding emergencies and disasters. This dissemination of information is being done in many ways. The Emergency Services Manager is meeting with neighborhood groups and community groups to discuss how they can best prepare for emergencies and educate them on what the City is doing to prepare for disasters. In addition to these meetings, the Emergency Service Manager prepares quarterly staff reports and makes presentations in open City Council meetings regarding the status of the Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program. The City is also utilizing the internet to keep our community informed. During times of emergencies or disasters, the City is using it's website to post on going updates about the disasters and the steps being done to recover. The Sausalito Police Department's web page has a Disaster Preparedness Section which provides the public with extremely valuable information regarding not only preparing for disasters but for surviving them.

No Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program can cover every aspect of every disaster and prepare everyone in their community. Citizens must take a proactive role in preparing themselves for disasters. The City of Sausalito encourages its citizens to self prepare for emergencies and disasters by educating themselves about disaster preparedness through the Southern Marin Fire Districts C.E.R.T (Community Emergency Response Team) and Get Ready Programs. These classes will teach the citizens the necessary skills and techniques needed to survive a disaster. Meet with your neighbors and develop disaster teams that will work together in your neighborhood when a disaster strikes. Prepare your family by developing emergency plans and stock pile supplies of food, water, clothing, batteries, and other equipment that you will need if a disaster strikes. Remember, depending on the severity of the disaster, local governments may not be able to provide a full range of services to the community and utilities and power may not be operable for a time span of 72 hours, so make sure you have enough supplies. In order to be successful during times of disaster, local citizens and the City of Sausalito must work together to reduce the disasters impact on the City.

If you have any questions regarding the City of Sausalito's Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Operations Program or have questions regarding disaster preparedness in general, please contact Sergeant Bill Fraass at bfraass@ci.sausalito.ca.us or (415) 289-4100 ex 657.

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