Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services
After Action Report
Improvement Plan

VTTX Flood

3/22/2016
FINAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services participated in a Flood Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) that is sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA), Emergency Management Institute (EMI) as one of a series of virtual exercises designed to bring numerous communities together in a collaborative environment.

The nearly four-hour, facilitator-led discussion touched the core capabilities of planning, public information and warning. This After Action/Improvement Plan summarizes the success of the exercise in meeting its goals.

Several strengths were noted in the County's understanding and performance of emergency procedures and roles. There were also several areas that could be improved based on the gaps, challenges, and recommended actions identified in the VTTX. These identified areas of improvement provided a basis of recommending a series of corrective actions or assignments in Appendix A. Improvement areas include: additional exercises that review previous lessons learned; identifying GIS mapping layers for critical infrastructure; and reviewing decision making authority for repopulation.

A list of workshop participants can be found in Appendix B.

EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Name	**Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) - Tornado**
Exercise Dates	March 22, 2016 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Scope	This discussion-based exercise was planned for four hours hosted by the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and conducted with multiple remote Video Teleconference sites including Sacramento County.
Mission Area(s)	Response and Recovery
Core Capabilities	Public Information and Warning, Mass Care and Rescue Operations, Housing, Economic Recovery, Situational Assessment
Objectives	- Discuss the capability to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable information to the whole community. - Discuss the ability to stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore vital systems and series. - Discuss the capability to return economic and business activities to a healthy state. - Discuss the capability to provide decision-makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of hazards.
Threat or Hazard	Flood
Scenario	The Flood VTTX was designed around the realistic scenario of a flood, which causes significant actions, by the participating jurisdictions and agencies.
Sponsor	Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services
Grant	No grant funds were allocated
Participating Organizations	A VTTX sign-in sheet is attached in Appendix B.
Point of Contact	Mary Jo Flynn, MS, CEM Emergency Operations Coordinator Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services flynnm@sacoes.org (916) 874-4671 office (916) 508-5131 cell

ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performance
Discuss the capability to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable information to the whole community	Public Information and Warning	P
Discuss the ability to stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore vital systems and series.	Mass Care and Rescue Housing	S
Discuss the capability to return economic and business activities to a healthy state.	Economic Recovery	S
Discuss the capability to provide decision-makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of hazards.	Situational Assessment	P

Ratings Definitions:
- Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
- Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws; however, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.
- Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.
- Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).

Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

Core Capability: Planning

Objectives:

- Discuss the capability to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable and actionable information to the whole community.
- Discuss the ability to stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore vital systems and series.
- Discuss the capability to return economic and business activities to a healthy state.
- Discuss the capability to provide decision-makers with decision-relevant information regarding the nature and extent of hazards.

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

Strengths

The structure of the exercise focused on a multimedia, facilitated format for the national players as well as Sacramento County. Time was given to review each module and then answer discussion questions with guidance from the onsite moderator. Sacramento County participants discussed all of the questions internally and then provided an out brief of our top three to four considerations for each allowing prioritization of issues to be part of the discussion. Our key strengths are highlighted and summarized below from each of the three modules.

1. Hearing the perspectives of other agencies throughout the country, especially the City of New Orleans, was seen as highly valuable to inform additional decision making, needs and issues not thought of by the Sacramento group.

2. Identified opportunities for additional training and exercises pertaining to past lessons learned from similar events.

3. Group was clear on authorities and responsibilities for the timing and issuance of voluntary and mandatory evacuations.

4. Open data is available to staff and residents. However, improving the interpretation of that data including recommended actions during specific conditions may help to improve public communications.

Areas for Improvement

1. Identify authorities for repopulation of flooded areas and offer regional training on those authorities and expected actions.

2. Review flood plans and documents if there are different recommended actions based on time of day to initiate evacuations. It was noted that night-time evacuations are problematic in terms of weather forecast accuracy and mobilization of resources and therefore requires advanced planning and earlier action.

3. As the volunteer management plan is being written, be sure that: identification of licensed medical professionals is addressed; legal guidance for contractors is identified;

and an ID maker or wristband systems are considered for identifying spontaneous volunteers who may provide clean-up service in a post-flood area and who have gone through an Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) vetting process.

4. Long-term planning and recovery groups may need to be assembled for training and exercises to work through streamlining permit processes, education needs for mitigation requirements or allowances to re-build; and development of a rapid assessment team to tag buildings following a flood.

5. Conduct a review of GIS data layers and critical infrastructure layers; ensure that they are loaded within WebEOC Mapper and accessible to WebEOC selected users. Be sure flood data may be overlaid within mapper or accessible by decision makers; in addition to other GIS mapping tools and flood modeling software.

6. Populate a board on WebEOC or maintain a database of lessons learned and after action improvement assignments. This might be accomplished through the Project Management WebEOC board. Maintaining a centralized location of after action improvements will allow for better progress monitoring, training and exercise scheduling throughout the operational area.

7. There was a clear desire from the group to continue these more frequent, smaller tabletop exercises. However, it was noted that participation from a larger pool of stakeholders would be more beneficial. Participants agreed to promote the tabletop exercises through their networks to encourage participation.

Analysis:

Overall, participants noted the need to review past flood incidents and ensure that lessons learned have been implemented or incorporated into current planning documents. Most important was a need to review authorities involving the repopulation of flooded areas and if there is a difference between letting residents back in to clean-up vs. reoccupy their home.

It was noted that as the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is undergoing its 5-year revision, that some of the above items may be able to be incorporated as mitigation tasks. As those certain tasks need funding, Hazard Mitigation Grants may be applied for and utilized to support some of the above improvements.

Training Recommendations:

1. DOC to EOC Interface Training
2. Lessons Learned Seminar to educate on previous incidents
3. Basic NIMS, SEMS, ICS training consistent with state and federal requirements

Resources:

"Legal Guidelines for Flood Evacuation." Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Advisory Board, 21 Nov. 1997. Web. 23 Mar. 2016. http://www.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/FEAT_2-LegalGuidelinesforFloodEvacuation(FEAT%20doc).pdf

"Emergency Plans for Mobile Home Parks." Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Advisory Board, 21 Nov. 1997. Web. 23 Mar. 2016.
http://www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/mobilehome-special-occupancy-parks/mobilehomeplanningguidance_11sept6.pdf

"Public Assistance Eligibility Guidelines for Floods." Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Advisory Board, 21 Nov. 1997. Web. 23 Mar. 2016.
http://www.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/PulicAssistanceEligibilityGuidlinesforFloods%20(FEAT%20doc).pdf

"Memorandum Report: After Action Report February 1998 Floods" Department of Water Resources. July 1998. Web. 23. Mar. 2016.
http://www.water.ca.gov/floodmgmt/docs_int/1998_AAR_FebFlood.pdf

Participant Survey

Participants were asked to rank elements of the exercise on a five-point scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement. All participants (N=9) participated in the survey.

The exercise was well structured and organized	4.7
The exercise scenario was plausible and realistic	4.8
The facilitator(s) was knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target, and was sensitive to group dynamics	4.6
The situation manual used during the exercise was a valuable tool throughout the exercise.	4.8
Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position	4.4
The participants included the right people in terms of level and mix of disciplines	4.8
As a result of this exercise, I learned new information that I will be able to implement in an actual event	4.3

What changes would you make to this exercise? Please provide any recommendations on how this exercise or future exercises could be improved or enhanced.

- Request more participation from stakeholders
- It was great. DWR should have taken a moment ahead of time to build a local scenario. It worked out on-the-fly, but could have been a bit more realistic.
- Very good exercise.
- Audio was inaudible at times (no fault of instructor). Changed to speaker phone which worked fine.
- First time observing – nothing this time

- Once again I appreciate the varied entities participating and hope more audiences and departments here locally will seek to participate.
- Need more participants. Like that [the Facilitator] Mary Jo does report back so we can focus on learning and not our report back.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for Sacramento County as a result of the Flood VTTX. All corrective actions are entered into WebEOC for tracking over time.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element[1]	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Housing	Repopulation	Identify authorities for repopulation	Planning	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
	Repopulation	Offer regional training on repopulation authorities	Training	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
Planning	Flood Plan	Review flood plans and documents if there are different recommended actions based on time of day to initiate evacuations	Planning	DWR	George Booth		
	Volunteer Management Plan	Be sure to include a process for identifying licensed medical professionals/volunteers	Planning	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
	Volunteer Management Plan	Include rapid system of vetting Spontaneous Volunteers through an EVC and providing temporary identification/marking	Planning	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
	Recovery Plan	Identify legal guidance for contractors	Planning	Department of Community Development	John Lundgren		
	Recovery Plan	Streamlining the	Training	Department of	John Lundgren		

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[1] Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

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		planning permit process post disaster		Community Development			
Threat and Hazard Identification	GIS Layers	Identify the currency of GIS layers that include critical infrastructure	Planning	GIS	John Culbert		
	WebEOC Mapper	Ensure GIS data layers are accessible within WebEOC Mapper	Planning	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
	Lessons Learned Database	Populate a board on WebEOC (possibly Project Management)	Organization	OES	Mary Jo Flynn		
Operational Coordination	Continue VTTX Exercises	Provide word-of-mouth promotion to colleagues regarding participation in VTTX	Exercise	OA Council	Ron Phillips		

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