

**STANISLAUS COUNTY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
CIVIL GRAND JURY CASE #07-40
2006 – 2007**

SUMMARY

The 2006-2007 Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury conducted a review and assessment of the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The purpose was to determine the scope and readiness of the County's plan to meet the needs of its citizens if and when a disaster occurs, such as flood, fire, earthquake, civil disorder, terrorism, agricultural terrorism, hazardous materials, et al. A County official stated, "This program is not about terrorists. This program is about the realities of life."

BACKGROUND

The most recent edition of the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan was published in 2002. The plan was developed in conjunction with the National Incident Management System and the California Standardized Emergency Management System guidelines. Every five years the plan, which is reviewed annually and after emergency events, is modified, republished and redistributed. The plan is available at the Stanislaus County Library and online at www.schsa.org.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury conducted its investigation through interviews with county public officials who have oversight responsibilities, through site visits and by reviewing the Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Plan.

Sites visited included:

- Emergency Services Disaster Preparedness Executive Office
- Coroner's Facility
- National Emergency Rescue Response Training Center
- Volunteer Center of Stanislaus County (United Way)

FINDINGS

1. The County Office of Emergency Services coordinates citizen/community/County disaster preparedness.
2. The Emergency Operations Plan is an all-risk document that addresses natural and man-made disasters. It addresses four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.
3. The Emergency Operations Plan does not address how to serve the needs of those relocated to the County after a disaster in their region of residence.

4. The Approval Authority for Homeland Security Grant Administration Committee is responsible for administrative oversight of Homeland Security grants, which total about \$1,000,000 annually. The committee consists of:
 - County Public Health Officer
 - Assistant Director of the Office of Emergency Services/Fire Warden
 - Stanislaus County Sheriff
 - City of Modesto Police Chief
 - City of Modesto Fire Chief
5. Each of the County's nine incorporated cities is responsible for its own emergency plan. City representatives serve on the County Operational Area Council. A designee from the County Office of Emergency Services chairs the committee.
6. There is a lack of centralized coordination and implementation of services provided by volunteer organizations.
7. The County Department of Public Health publishes yearly results of disaster preparedness and public health monitoring of reportable diseases and biological incidents. The results are available online at www.schsa.org.
8. The Coroner's Facility has inadequate space for autopsies, storage of corpses and supplies and for meetings with staff and greeting families. The ventilation system is inadequate. The data processing, record keeping, computer equipment and communication systems are inadequate.

Despite these limitations, the Coroner's Facility personnel are meeting guidelines of the Emergency Operations Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Office of Emergency Services:

1. Seek methods to improve the level of collaboration with volunteer organizations.
2. Develop a plan to meet the needs of evacuees coming from surrounding regions when a state of emergency arises.
3. Update the data processing, record keeping, computer equipment and communication systems in the coroner's office.

It also is recommended that the master plan for an upgrade of the Coroner's Facility become a high priority.

RESPONSE REQUIRED per sections 933(c) and 933.05 of the California Penal Code

Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services
Stanislaus County Department of Health
Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors