

Summary

From wildfires to earthquakes to winter storms, California faces more than its fair share of disasters, and is not immune to the risk of terrorism. California has a history of the public and private sector working together to reduce the impact of these disasters on businesses, employees, and the general public.

Background

The impact of the September 11th terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the need to better integrate the private sector resources in cooperative relationship with public sector emergency management, law enforcement, rescue, medical, and public health emergency responders. The need to respond rapidly, ensure the safety of all Californians, provide necessary emergency water, shelter, food and clothing, and to ensure the viability of economic recovery requires the collective resources and efforts of public and private entities. Realizing the need for a stronger public-private sector and state collaboration, California's Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger approved legislation (Senate Bill 546), and issued Executive Order S-04-06, giving Cal EMA greater authority to partner with private industry.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Business and Utility Operations Center (BUOC) is as follows:

Continuity of community. The BUOC will help facilitate “continuity of community” following disasters and may include maintenance of critical infrastructure such as transportation, power, food, water, shelter, healthcare, and telecommunications. This will in turn help businesses maintain their own continuity of operations.

Enhanced situational awareness. The BUOC will provide a greater degree of situational awareness to all parties. Situational awareness plays a key role in supporting informed decision making and avoiding duplication or conflict in efforts by the private sector and government.

Increased information flow. The BUOC will provide an increased bi-directional flow of information relating to activities, policies, and other efforts affecting critical community resources. Working side-by-side with government, the business community benefits from regular updates and more direct access to critical information.

Improved private sector support. The private sector has significant capability and willingness to provide supplies, services, and assistance to government. Through the BUOC, the private sector can provide this support – on both a commercial and pro bono basis – more efficiently and effectively.

Development of close partnerships. Through the BUOC, both the private sector and the government have the opportunity to develop trusted relationships and become true partners in the emergency response and recovery efforts.

Description

To further support the Governor's efforts, Cal EMA signed Memorandum of Understandings with private sector and non-profit organizations and created the BUOC (see member list

State Partnership – California Emergency Management Agency

below). Cal EMA and the BUOC members worked together to develop a strategy and operational plan to foster this critical partnership. The BUOC Activation Guidelines assist business and government to communicate, collaborate, and take the actions necessary to mitigate the effects of emergencies in California.

Charter Partners:

- California Grocers Association
- California Resiliency Alliance (formerly the Business Executives for National Security Bay Area Business Force)
- California Utilities Emergency Association

Coordinating Partners:

- Home Depot, Inc.
- Lowe's Companies, Inc.
- S.F. Helicopters, LLC
- Target Corporation
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- DirectRelief USA

The BUOC is intended to serve as an active operational component in the State Operations Center (SOC) which supports the Regional Emergency Operations Center's (REOCs), establish strategic priorities for the state and ensure a unified effort in responding to disasters in the state. The SOC and REOC activate under the authority of California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

SEMS was adopted by California in 1993, and provides a clear and consistent organizational structure for agencies involved in responding to emergencies. Under SEMS, each level of government operates an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which serves as the central coordinating point for communications, resource requests and information sharing among the five levels (field, local, operational area, region and state).

The development of the BUOC is intended to be a deliberative and iterative process. Training, exercises and events will build and mature the center over time. The fundamental goal is to continue to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the state's response capabilities.

In order to expedite resource requests, it is agreed that all private sector resources will be coordinated through the BUOC Charter Members. However, all BUOC members should assist the overall BUOC effort by providing trained and experienced staff to support BUOC activities.

Lastly, the BUOC is not meant to replace resources available from existing vendors on a procurement basis. The BUOC should enhance the activities of the private sector with local government. The BUOC is intended to identify potential private sector sources for requests that cannot be filled through existing state vendor lists or other authorized sources.

Requirements for Success

The BUOC members agree to provide trained, knowledgeable staff to support Cal EMA during times of disaster needs and in turn the Cal EMA will share situational awareness information and training opportunities.

Resources

California Emergency Management Agency has the following resources available through its partnership -- A seat in the Emergency Operations Centers; Resources to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; Web resources; Tools and templates and BUOC Guidelines, Emergency Partnership Advisory Workgroup.

Training and Exercises

California Emergency Management Agency hosts and participates in joint training and exercises with the public and private sectors

Communication Tools

California Emergency Management Agency uses the following methods of communication with your public/private partners -- Email alerts; In-person meetings on a quarterly basis; Conferences and other events; Teleconferences; Video conferences; Website

Links

www.calema.ca.gov

Contact Information

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