

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: May 19th, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Sean McDonagh, Chief of Police
Responsible Department: Police
Subject: Consideration of approval of Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the city council:

1. Receive and review the final draft of the city’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP);
2. Adopt the updated Emergency Operations Plan; and
3. Direct the Chief of Police, in the role of Director of Emergency Services, to maintain and update the EOP as necessary.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Chief of Police, in the role of Director of Emergency Services, has completed a comprehensive update of the city’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in coordination with subject matter experts from the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management (DEM), a review by the City Attorney, and collaboration with a variety of emergency management stakeholders, cities, and police chiefs across the county and the State of California.

The updated EOP aligns with national, state, and regional best practices and established emergency management frameworks, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

Following direction from the city council at the March 17, 2026 meeting, the draft EOP was released for public comment. Staff received and reviewed all submitted comments and evaluated them for possible incorporation into the final document. These public comments are attached to this staff report for transparency.

Based on public feedback, targeted revisions were made to the Community Engagement section to clarify the role of volunteer organizations and to differentiate between independent community actions and city-coordinated emergency operations. These revisions ensure alignment with NIMS and Incident Command System (ICS) principles related to resource management, accountability, and operational coordination.

Additionally, following discussion at the prior council meeting, the EOP was updated to further clarify the role of elected officials during emergencies. These revisions recognize that councilmembers perform important policy, leadership, and community-facing functions during an emergency, while establishing a clear distinction between those responsibilities and the operational coordination functions of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This approach aligns with established frameworks under NIMS, SEMS, and ICS, which provide a structured system for integrating elected officials into emergency management while maintaining effective command, coordination, and operational efficiency.

Updates were also made to clarify the Public Information Officer (PIO) function within the ICS framework. The PIO role encompasses all aspects of public information and communication, including social media messaging, Nixle alerts, media coordination, and press conferences. While the PIO is responsible for coordinating accurate, timely, and consistent information, messaging may be delivered by appropriate public safety executives, including the chief of police or fire chief, or by the city manager, depending on the nature of the incident. The mayor or vice

mayor may also participate in coordinated public messaging, provided such messaging is aligned with and formulated through the EOC to ensure a unified and consistent message. Maintaining unified messaging is critical during emergencies and disasters, as inconsistent or uncoordinated communications have historically led to confusion, reduced public trust, and diminished effectiveness of response efforts.

The EOP also incorporates updates related to training and preparedness. City staff assigned to emergency management and EOC functions will complete foundational ICS and NIMS training, including ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800, and will participate in periodic training and exercises, including city-level and multi-agency tabletop exercises.

Elected officials will be provided training through the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management's forthcoming elected officials training program, anticipated for release in June, with future training dates to be coordinated by the county.

Post-incident processes have also been formalized within the EOP. Following activations, the city will conduct a hot wash and after-action debrief, followed by the preparation of an After-Action Report (AAR) to capture lessons learned, identify areas for improvement, and support ongoing planning and training efforts.

Additionally, the EOP establishes that attachments, including supporting documents, templates, and reference materials, will be maintained in alignment with the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management's EOC resources. This approach ensures that the city's materials remain current, consistent with regional practices, and reflective of subject matter expertise, while allowing for updates without requiring full EOP re-adoption.

The final EOP reflects these updates and is now presented to city council for formal adoption. All public comments received during the review period are included as attachments for transparency and public record.

BACKGROUND

The City of Sebastopol maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to guide preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities for emergencies affecting the community.

An initial draft of the revised EOP was presented to the city council on December 16, 2025. At that time, council directed that the document be reviewed by the city attorney prior to further consideration. Following that review, the draft was updated to address legal and operational considerations and returned to council, where direction was given to release the document for public comment.

The public comment period provided an opportunity for community members, partner organizations, and stakeholders to review the draft EOP and provide input. Those comments were evaluated against NIMS, SEMS, ICS, and established emergency management best practices. The final draft incorporates appropriate revisions and is now returned to council for consideration and adoption.

DISCUSSION:

The updated EOP is designed to be practical, flexible, and aligned with national, state, and regional emergency management frameworks. It reflects both operational realities and the need for structured coordination during emergencies.

Public Comment Summary

Public comments generally focused on:

- The role of community and volunteer organizations

- Recognition of neighborhood-level response and independent actions
- Concerns regarding centralized coordination during early stages of incidents
- Clarification of communication pathways and coordination with the EOC

The feedback reflects strong community engagement and a shared interest in improving preparedness and response capabilities.

Revisions - Community Engagement

In response to public comments, the Community Engagement section was updated to:

- Acknowledge that some community organizations may operate independently
- Clarify that such actions are not conducted on behalf of the city
- Establish that any resources supporting city operations must be requested and coordinated through the EOC
- Reinforce accountability, tracking, and safety requirements under ICS/NIMS

These updates ensure alignment with established emergency management doctrine and reduce ambiguity around roles and responsibilities.

Revisions - Elected Officials Role

The EOP has been further updated to clarify the role of elected officials during emergencies.

The revised plan:

- Recognizes the important leadership, policy, and community-facing role of councilmembers
- Establishes a clear distinction between policy-level responsibilities and operational coordination
- Provides a structured framework for integration of elected officials through NIMS, SEMS, and ICS principles

This ensures that elected officials are effectively incorporated into emergency management while maintaining clear command structure and operational efficiency.

Revisions - Public Information Officer (PIO) and Public Messaging

The EOP clarifies the PIO function within the ICS framework as encompassing all aspects of public communication, including but not limited to, social media, Nixle alerts, media coordination, and press conferences.

While the PIO coordinates messaging, delivery may be conducted by any one or a combination of the following:

- The chief of police
- The fire chief
- The city manager

The mayor or vice mayor may also participate in public messaging, provided it is coordinated through the EOC and aligned with unified messaging.

These updates reinforce the importance of consistent, coordinated communication, recognizing that uncoordinated messaging during emergencies can lead to confusion, reduced public trust, and diminished operational effectiveness.

Revisions - Training and Preparedness

The EOP incorporates a structured approach to training and preparedness, including:

- Completion of ICS 100, 200, 700, and 800 by staff assigned to emergency management roles
- Participation in periodic training and exercises, including tabletop exercises
- Planned training for elected officials through the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management's 'elected officials' program (anticipated June 2026 release)

These updates ensure personnel have a foundational understanding of emergency management systems and maintain readiness through ongoing training.

Revisions - Post-Incident Processes

The EOP formalizes post-incident review processes, including:

- Conducting a hot wash following activations
- Completing an after-action debrief
- Preparing an After-Action Report (AAR)

These processes support continuous improvement, documentation, and alignment with reimbursement and planning requirements.

Revisions - Attachments and Supporting Documents

The EOP establishes that attachments, templates, and supporting documents will align with Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management resources.

This approach:

- Ensures consistency with regional best practices
- Maintains up-to-date documentation
- Allows administrative updates without requiring full council re-adoption

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The final EOP represents a significant improvement in clarity, flexibility, and operational alignment.

The updated plan enhances the city's ability to:

- Respond effectively to emergencies of varying scale
- Coordinate multi-department and multi-agency operations
- Maintain compliance with SEMS, NIMS, and ICS frameworks
- Integrate community support in a structured and accountable manner
- Deliver clear, unified public messaging

The revisions address both public feedback and council direction while maintaining a realistic, operationally focused approach.

The EOP is intentionally designed to be flexible rather than prescriptive, recognizing that emergency response requires real-time decision-making based on evolving conditions, available resources, and regional coordination. The existing 2021 EOP remains in effect until adoption of the updated plan.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES/ AND OR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

Goal 2: PUBLIC SAFETY

Strengthen the public's safety and improve the quality of life. Includes supporting our first responders (police, fire, public works), responding to emergencies, protecting people, property, and businesses, and engaging in emergency preparedness community outreach, public education and prevention activities.
Coalition of Housing/Keep County or review non-profit/change lead agencies
Keeping drugs out of town /drug enforcement

Goal 4: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION

Restoring public trust
Improve Public Communications

This agenda item represents the City Council General Plan Consistency (if applicable):

FISCAL IMPACT:

All work related to the EOP update has been conducted within existing departmental budgets. By utilizing internal staff resources and the expertise of Sonoma County DEM subject matter experts, the city avoided the need for outside consulting services, resulting in an estimated cost avoidance of approximately \$30,000.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date. The city has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items.

As of the writing of this agenda item report, the city has received numerous complaints related to Elderberry Commons which have been included in the statistics above. Staff anticipate additional public comments upon the posting of this agenda report. If staff receive public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this agenda item report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting and will be posted to the city website.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Revised draft of the EOP
2. Public comments received during the public comment period
3. Related excerpts from the National Incident Management System framework

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the City Council:

1. Receive and review the final Emergency Operations Plan;
2. Adopt the updated Emergency Operations Plan; and
3. Direct the Chief of Police, as Director of Emergency Services, to maintain and update the plan as necessary.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Approve staff recommendation (Recommended)
Adopt the updated Emergency Operations Plan.

Option 2: Approve with direction for additional revisions
Direct staff to consider modifications prior to adoption.

Option 3: Delay adoption for additional review
Direct further review or coordination prior to adoption.

Option 4: Take no action
Receive and file the report without adopting the EOP.

APPROVALS:

Department Head Responsible for Agenda Item:

Approval Date: 5/14/2026

CEQA Determination (Community Development/Planning):

Approval Date: 5/14/2026

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines. (Emi – is this language correct?)

Administrative Services (Financial):

Approval Date: 5/14/2026

Costs authorized in city Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (if applicable) (Please list which account the funds are to be allocated from:

City Attorney Approval

Alex Mog

Approval Date: 5/14/2026

Acting City Manager Approval:

Mary Gourley

Approval Date: 5/14/2026

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN DRAFT

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Introduction

Sebastopol is a small city in Sonoma County, California, located west of Santa Rosa and near the Pacific Coast and Russian River. Situated among low rolling hills, the city faces a variety of natural and human-caused hazards, including earthquakes, drought, wildfires, floods, and disease outbreaks.

The City of Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) establishes the framework for how the city prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergencies and disasters affecting the community. It defines the organizational structure, roles, and coordination processes needed to protect life, property, and the environment. The plan supports coordination with Sonoma County and aligns with state and federal emergency systems.

Using an all-hazards approach, the EOP ensures city departments, partner agencies, and community organizations can manage resources and operations effectively under any emergency conditions.

Purpose

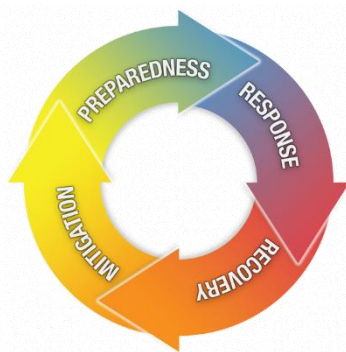
The purpose of the City of Sebastopol EOP is to establish clear authorities, responsibilities, and procedures for managing emergencies that may impact the city. The plan guides coordinated decision-making, resource allocation, and

communication among city departments and operational partners throughout all phases of an emergency—from initial response through long-term recovery.

The EOP is intended to:

- Guide the activation and management of the city's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Define lines of authority and coordination among city departments and with the Sonoma County Operational Area.
- Ensure continuity of essential city functions and services during disruptive events.
- Support timely, effective, and coordinated assistance to residents, businesses, and visitors.

This plan applies to all city personnel, elected officials, and partner organizations with emergency roles or responsibilities in Sebastopol. It is all-hazards, scalable, and adaptable to emergencies of any size or origin.



Preparedness Framework

The Sebastopol EOP is modeled on the widely recognized Preparedness Wheel (Emergency Management Cycle), which demonstrates that emergency management is a continuous, year-round process, not a single phase of activity.

The cycle includes four interconnected components:

- **Preparedness:** Training, exercises, planning, partnerships, and readiness activities.
- **Response:** Immediate actions to protect life, property, and essential services.
- **Recovery:** Restoring services, supporting the community, rebuilding, and documenting impacts.
- **Mitigation:** Reducing long-term risk through hazard prevention, planning, and structural or policy improvements.

Sebastopol's EOP incorporates all phases of this cycle to ensure a comprehensive, sustainable, and adaptable emergency management program. Each part of the plan supports one or more elements of the Preparedness Wheel, reinforcing the city's commitment to continuous improvement and community resilience.

Evacuations

The City of Sebastopol is unable to predict where an emergency may occur, the impacts of that emergency, or provide predetermined routes for all types of emergencies. The methods employed as part of the emergency response and any evacuation determined appropriate by authorities may need to pivot according to public safety needs or the nature of the emergency, which may be dictated by changing weather conditions, approach, or other currently unknown factors.

The City of Sebastopol is also subject to limitations in the capabilities of the arterial routes to and from the city, along with ownership of those particular routes.

Due to existing infrastructure and arterial road limitations, which already experience congestion during routine daily peak travel periods, evacuation capacity may be significantly constrained during an emergency and this has been identified as an issue from previous emergency evacuations. Residents and citizens should be prepared to evacuate early and not wait to be directed to evacuate, as delaying departure may result in limited roadway access, increased congestion, and extended evacuation times.

As such, residents and citizens are strongly encouraged to plan ahead for potential evacuations by familiarizing themselves with all available routes from their residence or any potential location that they may happen to be in the city, including primary and secondary roadways.

Early evacuation reduces risk, supports orderly movement, and enhances the ability of emergency services to operate effectively. If evacuation is required, and conditions and resources permit, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may direct staff to implement traffic control measures, including contraflow operations or directional changes to key arterial routes, to facilitate safe and efficient evacuation.

Community Engagement

Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. Organized volunteer groups, including but not limited to, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SCNU), and Meet Your Neighbors West

County (MYNWC) groups, serve as important components of community resilience.

These groups operate under the direction of the Sebastopol Emergency Operations Center (EOC) when activated by the Director of Emergency Management/EOC. The Director of Emergency Management or designee will coordinate with designated points of contact for each organization when their involvement is required by the city for a specific emergency.

Volunteers may assist with neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, GMRS radio volunteer radio communications, duties within the confines of their organization's respective training and delivery of verified public information.

Some community organizations are structured to act independently at the neighborhood level during emergencies and may choose to self-deploy in accordance with their own organizational structure and design. While such actions may provide immediate localized assistance, these activities are not considered official deployments under this Emergency Operations Plan and are not conducted on behalf of the City of Sebastopol. Individuals and organizations acting independently are not agents, employees, or representatives of the city and operate at their own discretion and risk.

Consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), all personnel and resources supporting city emergency operations shall deploy only when requested and assigned through established emergency management processes. As outlined in the National Incident Management System framework, unrequested or self-deployed resources may create additional supervisory, logistical, and safety challenges, complicate resource tracking and accountability, and interfere with access for formally requested resources.

If and when a volunteer organization or its members are requested and assigned by the EOC to support city coordinated emergency operations, they shall operate under the direction of the EOC and in accordance with established incident management protocols. At that point, activities shall no longer be conducted independently, and all further tasking, deployment, and operational actions shall be coordinated, tracked, and managed through the EOC.

The city retains discretion regarding whether and how volunteer organizations are utilized during an emergency. Participation in city coordinated operations

requires assignment through the EOC and compliance with established incident management, safety, and resource tracking protocols.

Access to operational areas, resources, or coordination functions may be limited to those personnel who are assigned, authorized, and tracked through the EOC.

All activation, tasking, resource assignments, and activity tracking for city coordinated response efforts shall occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, responder safety, and alignment with incident objectives and operational priorities.

Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

Sebastopol uses a whole-community approach to ensure individuals with AFN are supported during emergencies. AFN considerations are integrated into evacuation, sheltering, transportation, communication, and resource distribution.

City departments coordinate with social services, healthcare providers, and community organizations to identify needs and deliver accessible assistance. Public information is provided in multiple, accessible formats to ensure all residents receive critical updates, including the integration of interpreters and translators.

AFN needs are prioritized in resource allocation, and EOC staff and volunteers receive ongoing training to respond effectively and inclusively to individuals with disabilities or different levels of English proficiency.

Authority

The Director of Emergency Services (Chief of Police, or designee) has the authority to activate the EOC.

A Local Emergency may be proclaimed by the Director of Emergency Services and must be ratified by the city council within seven (7) days.

The declaration enables:

- Emergency powers
- Mutual aid requests
- Resource commandeering
- Suspension of procurement rules

- Liability protections for emergency actions

Elected Officials

Elected officials play a critical leadership role during emergencies by providing governance, policy direction, and oversight but do not perform tactical or operational functions within the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), emergency operations are conducted through a structured coordination system staffed by personnel assigned to specific roles based on training and subject matter expertise. EOC staff are responsible for collecting and sharing information, coordinating resources, and supporting operational decision-making. While elected officials provide policy guidance and oversight, they are not part of the operational EOC structure.

The Mayor, or in their absence the Vice Mayor, shall serve as the primary point of contact between the city council and the city's emergency management organization. The Mayor (or Vice Mayor) will be briefed by the City Manager or the Director of Emergency Management (Chief of Police) at intervals determined by the nature, complexity, and operational needs of the incident.

These briefings ensure elected officials remain informed and able to:

- Provide policy-level direction
- Support emergency proclamations and required governance actions
- Assist in setting priorities for response and recovery
- Assist in public information efforts

Individual council members may receive updates through established communication channels; however, direction regarding emergency operations shall flow through the City Manager and designated emergency management staff in accordance with this plan.

Elected officials may be physically present in or near the EOC when appropriate; however, their role is observational and policy-oriented. They shall not assume operational roles, direct staff, or interfere with assigned emergency management functions.

At the direction of the EOC Director or designee, elected officials may be assigned appropriate, non-operational support tasks to assist in the emergency response or recovery effort. These assignments may include activities such as supporting community resource or shelter operations, assisting with coordination of community needs, or facilitating communication with stakeholders. Any such assignments shall be clearly defined, coordinated through the EOC, and shall not conflict with established incident management (ICS) structures or operational responsibilities.

In their public-facing role, elected officials should focus on providing leadership, reassurance, and reinforcing verified public safety information. Public messaging should support community awareness, compliance with emergency directives, and recovery efforts as outlined in the Public Messaging section of this EOP.

Elected officials shall coordinate all public statements with the Public Information Officer (PIO) or EOC Director to ensure accuracy and consistency. They shall refrain from commenting on tactical or operational activities, including the actions, decisions, or performance of first responders or emergency personnel during an incident.

For safety and operational effectiveness, elected officials should not respond to active incident scenes unless coordinated through the EOC Director and shall follow the direction of on-scene personnel if present.

Public Information Officer (PIO)

The City of Sebastopol will coordinate all public information during emergencies through a designated Public Information Officer (PIO), operating within the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) organizational structure.

The PIO is responsible for developing and disseminating accurate, timely, and consistent public information, coordinating with Sonoma County and partner agencies, managing media inquiries, and monitoring and addressing misinformation.

The PIO operates under the direction of the EOC Director (Director of Emergency Services) to ensure that all messaging aligns with verified information and operational priorities. Pursuant to Chapter 2.36 of the Sebastopol Municipal Code, the Director of Emergency Services represents the city in matters

pertaining to emergencies; therefore, public communications are coordinated through the EOC to maintain a unified and consistent message.

Elected officials may happen to be contacted by the media or public during emergencies. To ensure accuracy and consistency, elected officials shall coordinate any public statements or media engagement with the PIO or EOC Director prior to dissemination.

Elected officials should focus their public communications on:

Providing reassurance and leadership to the community

Sharing verified public safety information issued through official channels

Encouraging compliance with emergency directives and protective actions

Supporting community resilience and recovery messaging

Elected officials shall refrain from commenting on tactical or operational activities, including the actions, decisions, or performance of first responders or emergency personnel during an incident.

All incident-specific operational information, updates, and technical details shall be communicated through the PIO to ensure accuracy, consistency, and alignment with ongoing response efforts.

Fire Department Operations

Fire protection and emergency medical services within the City of Sebastopol are provided by the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (GRFPD) following the consolidation of the city's former fire department into the district. This consolidated model represents the ongoing and standard framework under which the city, Sebastopol Police Department, and GRFPD operate on a daily basis.

GRFPD is the primary agency responsible for fire suppression, emergency medical response, rescue operations, hazard mitigation, and fire-related emergency management within the city. The district operates under its own command structure and responds in accordance with established fire service protocols and mutual aid agreements.

The City of Sebastopol and its Police Department coordinate closely with GRFPD as part of routine daily operations and during emergencies. This coordination is

conducted through the Incident Command System (ICS) and, when activated, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), utilizing unified command principles where appropriate.

This well established, day-to-day operational relationship ensures seamless integration during emergency incidents, supporting effective communication, efficient resource utilization, and coordinated response efforts focused on life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation.

Concept of Operations

Sebastopol's emergency operations focus on providing clear direction, coordination, and support during disasters and major incidents. The EOC manages citywide response efforts by maintaining situational awareness, sharing information, coordinating with partner agencies, managing mutual aid, and allocating resources.

Field operations are led by the department responsible for the incident, typically Police or Public Works. These departments handle on-scene actions, life safety, and immediate operational needs, while maintaining communication with the EOC for updates and support requests.

The EOC does not direct field tactics. Instead, it provides strategic support by:

- Monitoring overall conditions
- Coordinating resources and personnel
- Prioritizing departmental needs
- Communicating with Sonoma County and external partners
- Supporting public information and community messaging

This structure ensures field responders stay focused on operational tasks while the EOC manages broader coordination and decision-making for the city.

Activation

The Emergency Operations Center may be activated when any incident requires enhanced coordination, exceeds day-to-day departmental capacity, or has the potential to cause widespread impacts. Activation may also occur during planned events that require additional oversight, multi-department involvement, or direct coordination with Sonoma County.

Activation is authorized by the Director of Emergency Services, or designee. The primary EOC is at the Sebastopol Police Department. Should the Sebastopol Police Department be unavailable, an alternate location will be designated by the Director of Emergency Services, or designee.

Activation levels are scaled to the needs of the incident:

Level 3 – Monitoring

Used during minor incidents, weather advisories, planned events, or early signs of potential escalation. Departments maintain awareness and share information as needed. The Emergency Manager may also initiate pre-activation activities, such as checking communications systems, confirming staff availability, or reviewing initial situational information—to ensure the EOC can quickly transition to partial or full activation if conditions worsen.

Level 2 – Partial Activation

Used when multiple departments are engaged, when extended impacts are anticipated, or when coordination with Sonoma County is required. Key EOC positions are staffed physically or virtually.

Level 1 – Full Activation

Used during major emergencies that significantly impact the community. The full EOC structure is staffed, emergency declarations may be issued, and coordination expands to include county, mutual aid, utilities, NGOs, and regional partners.

The EOC may scale staffing up or down as conditions evolve. Sonoma County DEM is notified of all partial or full activations.

Organization, Roles & Responsibilities:

The of Sebastopol organizes its emergency response and coordination efforts through a structured framework that assigns clear roles, responsibilities, and communication pathways. This structure ensures efficient information flow, unified decision-making, and effective resource management during emergencies and planned events.

When an incident requires multi-department coordination or strategic support, the EOC may be activated. The EOC is organized into functional sections, each responsible for specific aspects of emergency management:

Function	Lead Department	Key Responsibilities
EOC Management	Chief of Police / City Manager	Overall coordination, emergency declarations, and public information oversight
Operations Section	Police / Gold Ridge	Field response coordination, life safety operations, evacuation, traffic/perimeter control
Planning Section	City Manager's Office	Situation status, information analysis, resource tracking, documentation, and demobilization planning. Combined with Logistics Section.
Logistics Section	Public Works	Resource ordering, facilities support, transportation, equipment, and communications. Combined with Planning Section.
Finance / Administration	Finance Department	Cost tracking, timekeeping, contracts, procurement, and recovery documentation
Public Information	Police / City Manager / City Clerk	Public messaging, media coordination, rumor control
Liaison Officer	EOC Director	Coordination with Sonoma County DEM, local jurisdictions, utilities, NGOs, and partner agencies

These coordinated functions support field operations led by police and public works, while the EOC provides centralized direction, situational awareness, resource prioritization, and policy guidance across the city organization.

When needed, the city EOC interfaces with the Sonoma County EOC, which may serve as the primary hub for regional coordination, mutual aid requests, and resource support.

The city council provides overarching policy direction, ratifies or issues local emergency declarations, and guides long-term recovery priorities.

This integrated structure ensures a unified, efficient, and compliant emergency response capability for the City of Sebastopol—supporting timely decision-

making, strong interagency collaboration, and effective protection of the community during emergencies and planned events.

EOC Set-Up Procedures

The City of Sebastopol maintains standardized procedures for activating, setting up, and sustaining EOC operations to ensure reliable information flow, situational awareness, and operational continuity.

Upon activation, the EOC Director or designee initiates EOC set-up to ensure the facility is operational and ready to support citywide coordination.

Key steps include:

Facility Preparation:

- Unlock and secure access points to the EOC facility.
- Ensure power, lighting, heating/cooling, and internet connectivity are functioning.
- Arrange workstations to support EOC sections (Management, Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance/Admin).
- Set up signage identifying each section's location.

Equipment and Systems Activation:

- Power on computers, telephones, radios, projectors, and status boards.
- Confirm access to Sonoma County Web-Based Disaster Management Tool, shared drives, city communication platforms, and critical software.
- Set up printers, copiers, and charging stations for mobile devices.
- Ensure backup power systems (portable generators, UPS units) are available if needed.

Information and Status Boards:

- Prepare situation status boards for incident details, resource tracking, and significant actions.
- Display event maps, weather updates, operational periods, and organizational charts.

- Post the current EOC Action Plan, safety information, and communications directory.

Check-In and Staffing:

- Implement EOC check-in procedures for all arriving personnel.
- Assign workstations and distribute EOC vests, quick guides, and job aids.
- Conduct a quick briefing on the incident status and activation level.

These actions ensure that the EOC can rapidly transition from activation to full operational capability.

Communications and Information Flow

Reliable communication is essential for maintaining situational awareness, coordinating resources, and supporting field operations. The Sebastopol EOC uses a multi-layered communication system to ensure redundancy.

Primary Communications Systems

- **City Radio Network:**
Used by Police and Public Works for operational communications and field coordination.
- **City Telephones, VoIP, and Email:**
Serve as primary internal and external communication channels for EOC personnel.
- **Sonoma County Web-Based Disaster Management Tool:**
Used for situation reporting, resource requests, mission tasking, and interagency coordination.

Backup and Redundant Systems

- **Satellite Phone:**
Maintains communication capability during major outages or network failures.
- **Field Radios:**
Portable handheld radios support communication with field supervisors if systems degrade.

Public Information and External Communications

Public messaging is coordinated through the Public Information Officer (PIO) and may include:

- City of Sebastopol website and social media channels
- Sebastopol Ready <https://sebastopolready.org/>
- SoCoAlert (County-managed emergency notification system)
- Nixle and community alerting platforms
- Coordination with Sonoma County Joint Information System (JIS) and local media outlets

All public communication must be coordinated through the EOC Director and PIO to ensure accuracy, consistency, and alignment with operational priorities.

Deactivation of the EOC

Deactivation of the Sebastopol EOC marks the transition from response to recovery and the return to normal city operations. The EOC Director, in coordination with Section Chiefs and the City Manager, determines when to deactivate based on:

- Stabilization of life safety threats
- Restoration of critical infrastructure
- Completion of priority objectives
- Resource availability and operational needs

Deactivation Process

Conducted in phases to maintain essential functions while scaling down.

Sections may demobilize sequentially; staff rotations adjusted accordingly.

All departments, field units, and partner agencies are notified of the schedule.

Sonoma County DEM is informed to maintain continuity of coordination.

Transition to Recovery

Planning Section documents ongoing recovery needs, final updates, and remaining actions.

Section Chiefs provide summaries of accomplishments, outstanding issues, and recommendations.

Final Documentation

All logs, action plans, and records are completed and archived.

Finance/Admin finalizes cost tracking, contracts, and documentation needed for reimbursement and After-Action Reviews (AARs).

Maintenance & Mitigation

Maintaining the Sebastopol EOP and the EOC is essential to ensure both remain accurate, actionable, and reflective of current operational capabilities. Regular maintenance and mitigation efforts strengthen the city's overall preparedness and resilience.

EOP Maintenance

The EOP is a living document that evolves based on lessons learned, technological advances, and changes in laws, regulations, and city resources.

The Director of Emergency Services (Police Chief) is responsible for overseeing the review and update of the EOP at least annually or following a significant incident or exercise. This review considers updates to departmental roles, staffing, policies, and resource availability, as well as findings from After-Action Reports (AARs), hazard assessments, and exercises.

Revisions are distributed to all city departments, key external partners, and Sonoma County DEM. Both electronic and physical copies are maintained to ensure accessibility during emergencies. Exercises, simulations, and tabletop reviews help validate the plan, test staff readiness, and identify areas for improvement.

EOC Maintenance

The EOC itself requires ongoing maintenance to always ensure operational readiness. Maintenance includes:

- Facility Readiness: Ensuring that the primary and alternate EOC sites are secure, clean, and equipped with adequate workstations, power, lighting, and environmental controls.

- **Equipment Maintenance:** Regular inspection and testing of radios, telephones, computers, printers, projection systems, and other critical equipment. Spare equipment and replacement supplies should be available for immediate use.
- **Communications Systems:** Testing of primary and backup communication systems, including the Sonoma County Web-Based Disaster Management Tool, satellite phones, radios, and auxiliary communications (ACS) equipment.
- **Supplies and Logistics:** Replenishment of administrative, medical, and operational supplies, including forms, personal protective equipment, office materials, and other consumables.
- **Documentation and Records:** Ensuring all EOC logs, SOPs, diagrams, and manuals are current, accessible, and properly organized.

Periodic drills and functional exercises are conducted to validate both the plan and EOC readiness. Maintenance activities ensure that, when activated, the EOC can immediately support multi-department coordination, resource management, and emergency operations in alignment with SEMS, NIMS, and ICS principles.

Mitigation

Mitigation activities are integral to maintenance, helping reduce future risk and strengthen community resilience. Key components include:

- **Hazard Assessment and Planning:** Regularly review hazards, vulnerabilities, and potential impacts to city infrastructure, public safety, and services.
- **Structural and Non-Structural Measures:** Maintain flood barriers, firebreaks, stormwater systems, and ensure updated land-use planning, building codes, and zoning regulations.
- **Integration with Emergency Operations:** Incorporate mitigation priorities into EOC planning, drills, and operational procedures to reduce vulnerabilities during incidents.
- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Collaborate with residents, businesses, utilities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to enhance public awareness, preparedness, and resilience.

- Continuous Improvement: Evaluate mitigation effectiveness after incidents or exercises, update strategies, and adjust implementation approaches based on lessons learned.

By combining maintenance and mitigation, Sebastopol ensures its EOP and EOC are not only operationally ready but also aligned with long-term risk reduction strategies, reinforcing the city's ability to respond, recover, and adapt to evolving hazards.

Sebastopol EOC Section Checklists

Management Section – City Manager / EOC Director

- Establish overall incident objectives and priorities
- Approve emergency public information and press releases
- Issue or recommend local emergency declarations
- Maintain communication with city council and policy group
- Liaise with Sonoma County DEM, State, and other agencies
- Monitor Section Chiefs and ensure coordination between EOC sections
- Make strategic decisions and allocate resources based on operational needs

Operations Section – Police

- Coordinate field response operations
- Manage life safety, evacuation, and perimeter control
- Identify needs for fire suppression and rescue operations
- Collect field intelligence and report to Planning Section
- Track resource deployment and status in the field
- Liaise with mutual aid agencies and other responding units
- Ensure the safety of field personnel and citizens

Planning Section – City Manager’s Office

- Maintain situational awareness and monitor incident status
- Collect and analyze data from field and EOC units
- Produce Situation Reports (SitReps) and Incident Action Plans (IAPs)
- Support demobilization planning and post-incident review
- Track resource availability and request additional assets as needed
- Document all actions, decisions, and communications
- Maintain maps, status boards, and other situational displays

Logistics Section – Public Works

- Identify and procure necessary resources and supplies
- Coordinate transportation, staging, and delivery of materials
- Ensure operational facilities are functional and staffed
- Maintain communications systems, computers, and IT support
- Provide food, water, medical support, and other personnel needs

- Monitor and maintain vehicles, equipment, and generators
- Track resource requests and confirm fulfillment with Planning Section

Finance / Administration Section – Finance Department

- Track personnel time and assignments
- Maintain financial records for incident response
- Process contracts, purchase orders, and vendor payments
- Document expenses for reimbursement and recovery
- Monitor cost tracking and resource allocation
- Track claims, liability, and compensation requests
- Prepare post-incident financial and administrative reports

Deactivation

The EOC will be deactivated once the incident is stabilized, field operations have concluded, and citywide coordination is no longer required.

- Ensure all departments and field units are demobilized safely
- Finalize documentation and submit reports to Planning Section
- Confirm cost tracking and financial documentation completed in Finance Section
- Notify Sonoma County EOC of deactivation
- Conduct post-incident briefing with all Section Chiefs and EOC staff
- Return EOC to standby status, securing equipment and communications

Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance ensures EOC readiness for future incidents.

- Inspect and test communications systems, phones, radios, and computers
- Maintain EOC supply caches, including office, medical, and logistics supplies
- Test backup generators, lighting, and environmental controls
- Update maps, status boards, and planning templates
- Review and update staff contact lists and mutual aid agreements
- Schedule periodic drills and tabletop exercises
- Conduct annual review and update of EOP and all annexes

Threat Assessment Annex

Hazard	Primary Concerns / Notes
Flood	River and drainage overflow; property damage, road closures, evacuation
Wildfire	Air quality, property loss, evacuation, fire suppression coordination
Severe Weather	Wind, rain, hail; infrastructure damage, transportation impacts
Hazardous Materials	Chemical spills, leaks; contamination, evacuation, specialized response
Public Health / Pandemic	Widespread illness, hospital surge, public messaging, shelter protocols
Civil Disturbance / Protest	Crowd control, law enforcement coordination, traffic and safety management
Transportation Incidents	Vehicle crashes, rail incidents, road closures, coordination of emergency services
Utility / Infrastructure Failure	Power, water, gas outages; public safety, continuity of operations
Major Earthquake	Structural damage, mass casualties, utility failures, transportation disruption
Terrorism / Civil Security Threats	Violent attacks, bombings, cyber incidents; coordination with law enforcement and emergency partners
Energy Loss / Blackout	Extended power/fuel outages; impacts on healthcare, communications, and essential services
Food & Agriculture Emergencies	Contamination, crop failure, or supply disruption affecting public health and food security

Message Templates:

This section provides standardized message templates to streamline communication during emergencies, ensuring clarity, consistency, and rapid dissemination of information to the public, media, and partner agencies.

Applicable for all hazards, including natural, technological, and human-caused events. Templates can be adapted based on incident type while maintaining core messaging for situational awareness, protective actions, and official guidance.

All-Hazard Message Template

Source	Hazard	Location	Action	Trusted link/More Information
Agency/Department	Type of Hazard Ex: Flood, Fire, Earthquake	City, Neighborhood, street and/or facility	Recommended action for safety Ex: Evacuate, Shelter in Place	Official source or hotline for more information
Example:				
City of Sebastopol PD	Flood	Laguna St. Between Main St & Bodega Ave.	Evacuate immediately	SoCoEmergency.org

Hazard-Specific Message Guidance Table

Hazard Type	Typical Location Considerations	Recommended Actions	Additional Notes
Flood	Low-lying areas, riverbanks	Evacuate, avoid travel	Monitor river levels via SoCoAlert
Wildfire	Forested or grassland areas	Shelter-in-place or evacuate as directed	Follow official evacuation instructions
Earthquake	Throughout city	Drop, Cover, Hold On;	Prepare for aftershocks and be aware of potential structural damage

Severe Weather	Storm-prone streets and roads	Stay indoors, secure property	Monitor local weather advisories
Public Health	Schools, public facilities	Follow health directives	Include links to Sonoma County Public Health
Hazardous Materials	Industrial areas, transportation routes	Evacuate or shelter-in-place as instructed	Provide info on chemical involved if known
Terrorism	Public spaces, infrastructure	Follow law enforcement instructions	Avoid speculation, confirm from official sources
Energy Loss	Citywide or localized grid outages	Conserve resources, use emergency generators	Update from utility providers
Food & Agriculture	Farms, markets, distribution centers	Follow food safety guidance	Link to USDA or State resources

Notes:

- All messages should be verified through official channels before dissemination.
- Include contact info for further instructions when possible.
- Use consistent formatting to reduce confusion during emergencies.

City Council Resolution Template:

RESOLUTION NO. XXXX-XXXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
RATIFYING THE POLICE CHIEF / DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
ACTIVATION OF THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
AND DECLARATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, On or about **[date]**, a condition of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property arose within the City of Sebastopol due to **[brief description of incident — e.g., severe weather, flooding, wildfire, civil disturbance, public health emergency]**; and

WHEREAS, said conditions were beyond the capacity of ordinary municipal services, personnel, equipment, and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services is authorized to act as the Director of Emergency Services and to take necessary and appropriate actions during an emergency; and

WHEREAS, on **[date and time]**, the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services determined that a local emergency existed and activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate emergency response and protective actions; and

WHEREAS, the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services further declared a local emergency and took emergency actions necessary to protect life, property, and public health; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan requires that such declaration be ratified by the governing body within a 7 day time period; and

WHEREAS, the city council has reviewed the circumstances and finds that the declaration and activation were necessary and appropriate under the conditions then existing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the city council of the City of Sebastopol finds that:

The activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services on **[date]** is hereby ratified, confirmed, and approved; and

The declaration of a local emergency made by the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services on **[date]** is hereby ratified and confirmed; and

The local emergency shall continue to exist until terminated by further action of the Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services, and

The Police Chief / Director of Emergency Services, City Manager, and other designated officials are authorized and directed to take all necessary actions to carry out the emergency response and recovery efforts consistent with applicable law; and

This Resolution shall be forwarded to the County and State Office of Emergency Services (CALOES) as required by law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ___ day of _____, 20 __, by the following vote:

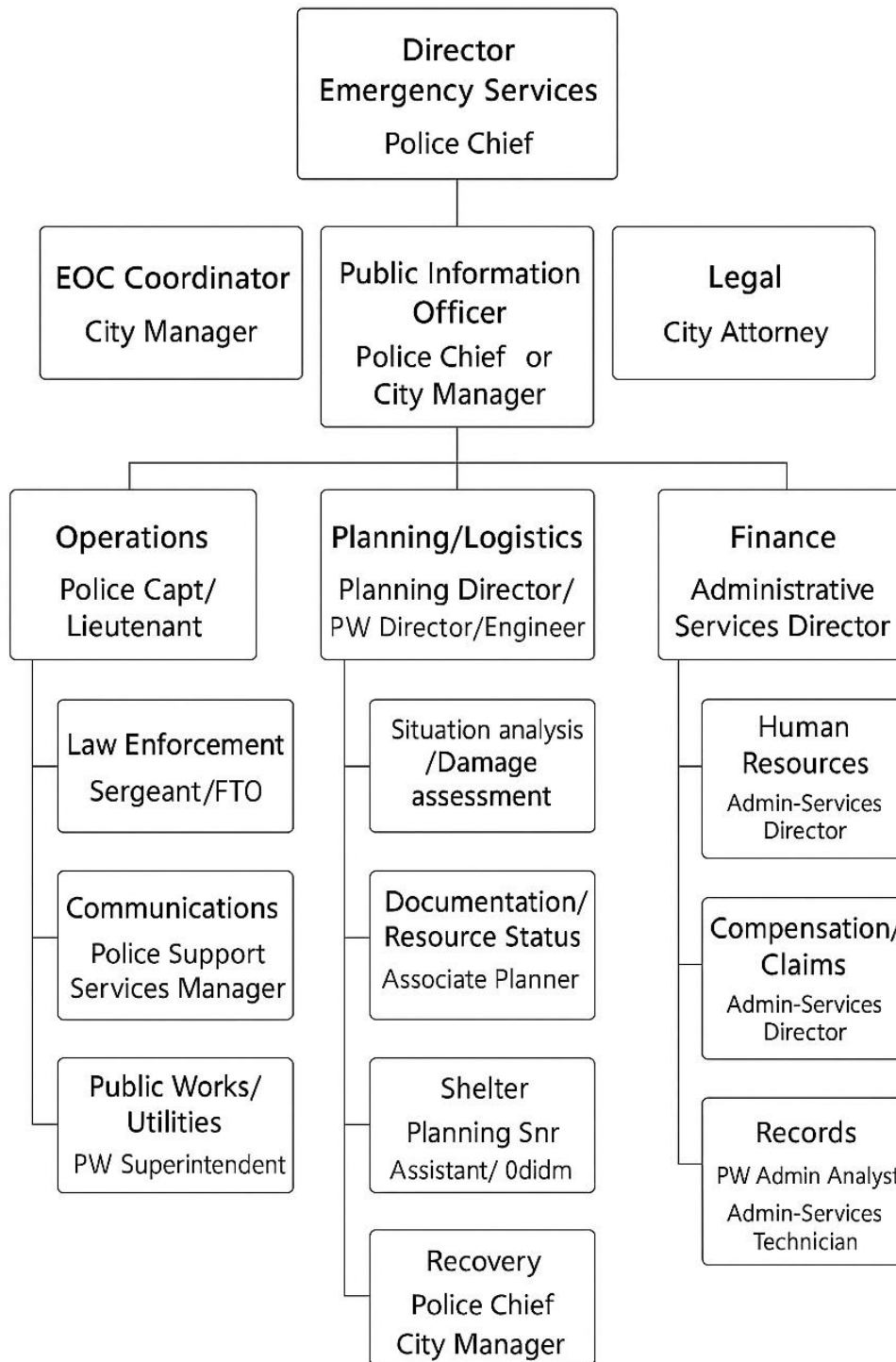
- AYES:
- NOES:
- ABSENT:
- ABSTAIN:

Mayor / Chair

ATTEST:

City Clerk / Clerk of the Board

EOC Organization Chart



PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Sean McDonagh

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 4:55 PM
To: Sean McDonagh
Subject: Emergency Operations Plan: evacuations and evacuation routes

Chief McDonagh:

Thanks much for the distribution of the Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan.

From past experiences in my professional life I gained a lot of knowledge, training, responsibility and experience in the realm of emergency planning for schools, multi agency, cooperation and public and private partnerships.

Without going into detail, it's from this experience and training that I want to ask a few questions about evacuation plans. I do understand why it could be counterproductive to post or even determine specific Evacuation plans in advance.

I would be curious to know what internal discussions, planning and training have been dedicated to alternate scenarios targeting Evacuation ... up to and including potential conflict between necessary and variable routes for responders' path of travel plans and actions of community members in a heightened emergency.

A good set of framing questions could be:

What is the understanding of people now ... about which direction they would go ... on which highway or roadway ... to evacuate (for any number or type of emergencies)

Do responders have a general working template

How will responders decide which roads they need to travel to get to any particular emergency or set of emergencies as the events unfold

If such roads would need to be secured for responders only what will be communicated to residents who need to change their path of travel

What system would we use for that communication and are those systems in place

How adept is either the technology system or human communication system, in communicating out those changes in real time as much as possible

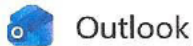
How do we get the Community to think of, and buy into the fact, that there will be scenarios potentially that make it necessary to shut down roadways and highways and so forth so that responding vehicles have a clear pathway

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to discuss any of these issues at any time from the perspective of my professional responsibilities and duties when I was employed with Berkeley Unified School District as Transportation manager and coordinator of Emergency planning.

Many thanks



bc sebastopol



3/17 Council Meeting and EOP comments on Community Engagement section

From [REDACTED]
Date Sat 4/4/2026 5:01 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hi Andrew,

I am submitting the following language for the "Community Engagement" section of the EOP in order to more accurately frame the 'community volunteer' programs mentioned. The key issue involving the MYNWC program is that we promote and expect self deployment in the neighborhood to quickly find out about our neighbors and begin helping each other immediately. This obviously differs from other programs that are trained and deploy officially through activation within the context of the EOC and Emergency Manager. Please accept the following:

Community Engagement

'Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. Organized volunteer groups — including the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU), and Meet Your Neighbors West County (MYNWC) groups — serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability, each operating under a distinct model appropriate to their role.

CERT and SNCU operate under the direction of the Sebastopol EOC when activated. The Director of Emergency Management will correspond directly with the designated point of contact for each group when their involvement is determined necessary. Volunteers in these programs do not self-deploy; activation, tasking, activity logging, and participation tracking occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, safety, and coordinated operations across departments.

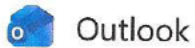
MYNWC neighborhood groups operate on an immediate self-deployment model. Residents are educated and expected to respond autonomously within their own neighborhoods without waiting for EOC activation, keeping first responders available for life-safety and property emergencies citywide. When the EOC is activated, the Director of Emergency Management may coordinate with MYNWC's program point of contact to share situational awareness and align efforts where appropriate.

All community volunteers — whether EOC-activated or self-deploying — assist within the scope of their education or training. This includes providing neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, basic first aid, and delivery of verified public information.'

Are submittals such as this posted for others to see during the public comment period? If so, where are they posted. Thanks.

Be safe,





2026 EOP Draft for public review

From [REDACTED]
Date Sun 4/5/2026 1:04 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hello,

As a member of an active MYNWC neighborhood group (9 years and 21 residences), I strongly object to the following statements in the Community Engagement section of the EOP draft: "Community volunteers do not self-deploy. Activation, tasking, logging participation and activities occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, shared operational and mission objectives, safety, and coordinated operations across departments."

That certainly applies to CERT members who are activated by the EOC, but should not be demanded of MYNWC neighborhoods. Self-deploying is what MYNWC neighbors DO in the first minutes of an emergency:

After taking care of ourselves and checking our home situation, we will

- 1) Call 911 if necessary;
- 2) Meet in a pre-designated area;
- 3) Begin the process of checking on and caring for everyone in the neighborhood; and
- 4) If First Responders are not available, handling what is required to the best of our ability.

We are NOT going to wait for directions from EOC to determine what needs to be done, and how and who will do it. In a major emergency event like that, I expect EOC to be plenty busy doing its job of handling the bigger picture, and, just like the First Responders, not be available to pay attention to our neighborhood anytime soon.

We are going to take care of ourselves the best we can, and get out of the way when First Responders arrive. If at some point the EOC became available for actual assistance, and not just control, that would be great.

Thank you for updating the EOP,

[REDACTED]
Sebastopol

 Outlook

EOP plan draft

From [REDACTED]
Date Wed 3/25/2026 8:39 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

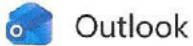
Hi City,

This plan contains a lot of boilerplate language and will only be as effective as the people managing it. It's a heavy lift for a police chief who has many competing responsibilities.

I do think it's worth adding something that indicates that the messaging templates and messages will include Spanish language versions and that messaging plans will include those without internet access.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]



EOP feedback on wildfires

From [REDACTED]
Date Sun 4/19/2026 9:30 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute some feedback to the EOP.

I'm NFPA Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist who studies and consults on community impacts caused by wildfire including topics such as predicted Fire Weather, early alerts, evacuation, structure hardening, defensible space, first responder safety, etc.

Time can be our worst enemy or our best friend. It is essential to educate people on predicted Fire Weather Watches, which come 1-3 days BEFORE a Red Flag Warning. Lahaina had 4 days notification by the National Weather Service. The 2025 LA Firestorm had 5 days. The Tubbs fire also had predicted Fire Weather. Very productive things can occur during that lead time.

This is one of the most important assets we have in our tool kit... it gives community members, first responders, agencies, nonprofits, etc. advanced time to prepare properties before evacuating EARLY, providing improved ingress/egress and mitigation to structures.

Firefighters are taught about wildfire behavior and weather is a top priority here.

Most everyone assumes Sebastopol is safe from wildfire. While the risks are lower than say Fountaingrove, it can certainly happen here. It can also happen in Petaluma, or Bodega Bay. Besides embers traveling great distances, there could be a wildfire in Santa Rosa, and strong winds here, with no wildfire... but if there is a simple structure fire that can turn into an urban configuration scenario.

The location of your property is very important, but how it is designed to tolerate fire is often more important. Think Coffee Park.

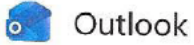
Therefore, the gift of time provided by the National Weather Service is something EVERYONE should be educated about.

Please feel free to reach out to me for further discussion.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
Downtown Sebastopol

Sent from my iPhone



FW: New Feedback by mike@mbaldus.com

From info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Date Wed 4/8/2026 10:59 AM
To Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Please see email submitted to the City of Sebastopol.
BCC:Email BCC to City Council and City Attorney
City staff who have also received this email are included into the CC as shown above.
Thank you
Mary Gourley
Interim City Manager

From: City of Sebastopol <noreply@cityofsebastopol.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 9:39 AM
To: smehta@planetaria.com; info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: New Feedback by [REDACTED]

Describe the Issue

The EOP s/b reworded to reflect the fact that groups like SNCU and MYNWC are specifically designed to be self-deployed. No government activation is necessary.

Email

[REDACTED]

Url of page

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/2026-emergency-operations-plan-eop-draft-for-public-review/>



EOP

From [REDACTED]
Date Mon 4/6/2026 5:02 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc [REDACTED]

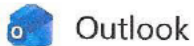
I have read the EOP for Sebastopol. Even tho I live near Graton, the city EOP affects all. My neighborhood, Lower Bones Road, is active in Meet YourNeighbor West County, in GMRS radio communications(Graton/GreenValley monthly net), in NBCC practice drills and have a great connection with Graton Fire.

My comments about the EOP are from the perspective of someone who lost their home in the Tubbs Fire, moved here in 2017 and has an active interest in neighborhood preparedness.

MYNWC is not 'activated' thru the EOC, and would not be in a position to take direction from the EOC in an emergency. We have no idea how we would communicate with the EOC. We are always active about neighborhood issues, and one of our challenging issues is just how we will communicate effectively with everyone in our neighborhood and in adjacent neighborhoods let alone the EOC

We, our neighborhood, thru GMRS nets and NBCC contacts hope, plan, practice for communicate in an emergency, work to take care of ourselves and communicate our needs only when critically necessary. We would really like something in the EOP that recognizes that and has a plan for area wide communication. 🙄 MYNWC is focused on neighborhoods. It is not a top down organization. The EOC 'communicating with the leader' of MYNWC is not an effective plan . Sebastopol is not and should not operate like an isolated island

Thank you.
[REDACTED]



3/17 Council Meeting and EOP comments on Community Engagement section

From [REDACTED]
Date Sat 4/4/2026 5:01 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hi Andrew,

I am submitting the following language for the "Community Engagement" section of the EOP in order to more accurately frame the 'community volunteer' programs mentioned. The key issue involving the MYNWC program is that we promote and expect self deployment in the neighborhood to quickly find out about our neighbors and begin helping each other immediately. This obviously differs from other programs that are trained and deploy officially through activation within the context of the EOC and Emergency Manager. Please accept the following:

Community Engagement

'Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. Organized volunteer groups — including the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU), and Meet Your Neighbors West County (MYNWC) groups — serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability, each operating under a distinct model appropriate to their role.

CERT and SNCU operate under the direction of the Sebastopol EOC when activated. The Director of Emergency Management will correspond directly with the designated point of contact for each group when their involvement is determined necessary. Volunteers in these programs do not self-deploy; activation, tasking, activity logging, and participation tracking occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, safety, and coordinated operations across departments.

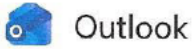
MYNWC neighborhood groups operate on an immediate self-deployment model. Residents are educated and expected to respond autonomously within their own neighborhoods without waiting for EOC activation, keeping first responders available for life-safety and property emergencies citywide. When the EOC is activated, the Director of Emergency Management may coordinate with MYNWC's program point of contact to share situational awareness and align efforts where appropriate.

All community volunteers — whether EOC-activated or self-deploying — assist within the scope of their education or training. This includes providing neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, basic first aid, and delivery of verified public information.'

Are submittals such as this posted for others to see during the public comment period? If so, where are they posted. Thanks.

Be safe,





RE: Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan 'Public Comment' period

From Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Date Mon 4/6/2026 10:09 AM

To [Redacted]

Cc [Redacted]

<abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Andrew Bauer

[Redacted]

Thank you for chiming in on this. I met with [Redacted] last week and we discussed the wording regarding self-deployment. It was never intended to stop any of your organizations from deploying as you historically have, but rather that nobody (and no organization) is to assume approval from the EOC or their functions without being specifically assigned that function/task. The purpose of that is to guarantee that everything follows ICS to the tee, ensuring tracking, accountability and if necessary, reimbursement.

We'll work on rehashing that wording to ensure that we better capture the intend of that wording! We appreciate the partnership and advice from all of you.

Sean McDonagh | Chief of Police
Sebastopol Police Department
6850 Laguna Park Way | Sebastopol, CA 95472
Tel. (707) 829-4400 | Fax (707) 829-0967



From: [Redacted]

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2026 8:11 AM

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted] Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Subject: Re: Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan 'Public Comment' period

Thanks, [Redacted] As always, you provide solid clarity of process based on your years of experience in your area.

Be safe,

[Redacted]

On Sun, Apr 5, 2026 at 7:09 AM [REDACTED] wrote:

[REDACTED] Chief McDonagh -

A couple of things to note. [REDACTED] is 100% correct about the role of community volunteers and self-deployment. Unfortunately the County EOC penchant is to want complete top down control and management rather than bottom up voluntary (and force multiplying) assistance.

In our COPE organizations, we ALWAYS self deploy, often as much as 12-24 hours before any official emergency declaration. Also, our CERTs are taught to take care of their families and neighbors first as Good Samaritans before volunteering as official CERTs. Our Radio Communications team often deploys early, particularly if the incident has or is expected to interfere with cell and internet usage. We do this to better coordinate with Sonoma County Public Infrastructure and assist with traffic control and light road clearance (e.g. chain sawing fallen trees) using our GMRS and LoRa radio systems.

Also, the DEM CERT team reports directly to the DEM managers at the EOC and as a result are not even in the ICS chain of command which starts with a Fire Services Chief. Our CERT team is integrated into the Fire Services response (often thru mutual aid agreements) and deploys at the direction of the incident commander. Increasingly we deploy as Good Samaritans such as aiding in staffing up during Red Flag Warnings.

If Chief McDonagh as your local IC requests help from either of our Fire Chiefs - e.g. solar and other supplemental alternative power equipment, assistance with evacuation traffic control, assistance establishing an emergency shelter (we have on loan from Red Cross a 75 bed shelter trailer along with 11 trained shelter operators and managers), we would respond either as Good Samaritans or as CERTs according to the circumstances.

So in summary, things are quite a bit more nuanced than the top down approach used by the County.

Hope that helps your deliberations.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 4, 2026 4:37 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan 'Public Comment' period

Of course now I find this form to submit our comments...



On Sat, Apr 4, 2026 at 3:38 PM [REDACTED] > wrote:

Greetings all,

The Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is in a 30 day 'Public Comment' period (likely beginning 3/18) before finalizing the plan. As neighbors interested in emergencies, preparedness and working together to respond adequately in our neighborhoods, your review of and comments on the EOP (attached) is important. Included below is the link to the City Council meeting of 3/17 which passed the EOP on for public comment. The specific period of discussion about the EOP is worth your time to review and could impact your comments on the plan.

I want to draw your attention to the following sections of the EOP:

Community Engagement

Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. Organized volunteer groups, including but not limited to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU), and Meet Your Neighbors West County (MYNWC) groups, serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability.

These groups operate under the direction of the Sebastopol EOC when activated. The Director of Emergency Management for the city will correspond directly with the point of contact for the respective volunteer group if their involvement is determined necessary for the specific emergency.

Volunteers may assist with neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, basic first aid within their training, staffing of resource

distribution points, and delivery of verified public information. Community volunteers do not self-deploy. Activation, tasking, logging participation and activities occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, shared operational and mission objectives, safety, and coordinated operations across departments.

The last paragraph needs your attention with an eye toward the MYNWC program efforts and intentions. Here it is again:

>>Community volunteers do not self-deploy. Activation, tasking, logging participation and activities occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, shared operational and mission objectives, safety, and coordinated operations across departments.<<

The above statement is more accurate for training programs that receive certification and those programs that have official 'activation' requirements and assignment protocols. As an example, CERT members receive certification and can be officially activated and have assignment protocols that anticipate working through the EOC directly.

However, self-deploying is what MYNWC neighbors do to immediately check-in and begin caring for each other in the first minutes during an emergency. Figuring out what needs to be done, how and who will do it within a given neighborhood are NOT actions we want to wait to do nor have we ever expected to receive such instructions from the Emergency Manager. As you well know, in a 'shelter-in-place' scenario for any of our MYNWC neighborhoods or areas, we have prepared to work together with an understanding that First Responders are not able to get to us while focusing on other directly impacted areas during an emergency. We intend to leverage our neighborhood resilience and stay out of the way as much as possible.

This is the first significant updating and revision of the Sebastopol EOP in quite some time. It is a realistic picture of what can be expected when emergencies hit. Your comments are needed and requested about the full EOP. Please pay specific attention to the details and wording in the Community Engagement section. If you agree a re-wording is needed to more effectively include our MYNWC neighborhood efforts, please comment. If you have suggestions on re-wording that may improve the section overall, please submit them. You can send your comments here:

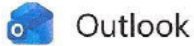
citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov

Below is the video of the March 17th City Council meeting

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/11524281?video=1174941732> >>>EOP at just passed 2 hr mark<<<<

Although I believe City Admin, City Council and the Emergency Management System intend the best emergency response for local area residents, the tension at the dais during the EOP discussion in the 3/17 video certainly seems to indicate a more 'working together' attitude is needed.





FW: EOP review: MYNWC deploying during emergencies

From City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Date Mon 4/6/2026 11:01 AM
To Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Please see public comment as it relates to an agenda item on the upcoming city council meeting.

BCC: Email BCC to City Council, City Attorney

City staff that received this email are listed in the CC distribution line as noted above.

City Staff: Please Post to City Website

Thank you

Mary Gourley

Interim City Manager

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 4, 2026 4:53 PM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: EOP review: MYNWC deploying during emergencies

Dear council members [REDACTED]

I would like a section to be added in the EOP expanding upon what residents are allowed and not allowed to do when first responders are not available during major disasters such as earthquake and fire, or even in local emergencies such as downed power lines blocking a road in a storm.

It would be helpful to include a scenario for each of various types of crisis, and what is allowed for laypersons to do, what is allowed for CERT graduates to do, etc.

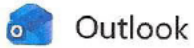
This would not only help make it clear to us residents, but would help inspire residents to get more understanding, training, supplies, and neighborhood networking.

Over time, as we get more experience and learn about what emergencies are happening in other places, we will get ideas about how to edit and add more scenarios.

In MYN/MYNWC, we have been meeting and training for many years about possible emergencies, of which there are infinite variations, and some neighborhoods have used our training to good stead already. Our actions are to be used when first responders are not available.

Thanks for your attention,

[REDACTED]



FW: New Feedback by mike@mbaldus.com

From info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Date Wed 4/8/2026 10:59 AM
To Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Please see email submitted to the City of Sebastopol.
BCC:Email BCC to City Council and City Attorney
City staff who have also received this email are included into the CC as shown above.
Thank you
Mary Gourley
Interim City Manager

From: City of Sebastopol <noreply@cityofsebastopol.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 9:39 AM
To: smehta@planeteria.com; info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: New Feedback by [REDACTED]

Describe the Issue

The EOP s/b reworded to reflect the fact that groups like SNCU and MYNWC are specifically designed to be self-deployed. No government activation is necessary.

Email

[REDACTED]

Url of page

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/2026-emergency-operations-plan-eop-draft-for-public-review/>

April 4, 2026

Sebastopol Police Department
Sean McDonagh, Chief of Police
6850 Laguna Park Way, Sebastopol, CA 95472

RE: Public Comment; EOP Draft proposal

Chief McDonagh,

My observations are based on 15 years of volunteer participation with the Sebastopol Fire Department's CERT program and leading the design and leadership of the SNCU (Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit). I have read much of the EOP Draft proposal and have several observations for your consideration.

As presented in Agenda Item #12: The March 17, 2026, Sebastopol City Council meeting, it was gratifying to read that the City acknowledges the value and usefulness of volunteer organizations:

Community Engagement

Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. **Organized volunteer groups**, including but not limited to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SCNU), and Meet Your Neighbors (MYN) groups, **serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability.**

These groups operate under the direction of the Sebastopol EOC when activated. The Director of Emergency Management for the city will correspond directly with the point of contact for the respective volunteer group if their involvement is determined necessary for the specific emergency.

Volunteers may assist with neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, basic first aid within their training, staffing of resource distribution points, and delivery of verified public information.

[My Bolding]

Relying on strong community partnerships with volunteers that serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability implies inclusion in the EOP. I have not found a reference to staffing, protocols, or equipment to utilize Neighbor-generated SitReps or to disseminate Evacuation-Zone-specific or other time-sensitive information. (Did I miss it?)

A single reference is made to radio communications; “simplex” only. In conjunction with the County, a county-wide network of GMRS repeaters has been established to provide neighbors with the capability to send and receive time-sensitive communications. Use of the repeater network is considered “duplex” not simplex. Understandably, a remote electrically powered repeater is subject to power outages; not all disasters will result in power-out conditions.

The City has already funded several GMRS base stations to link the public to the EOP, without sending “noise” into the Emergency Operations Center. And 100 radios or more have been distributed to the public. All for the expressed purpose of creating a power-out communication network. The system was designed to answer the question, “Who can I call for help when first responders are busy, and cellphones are not working or are overloaded?” Additionally, from its inception, the network was designed to enable residents to contact a trained SNCU Hub operator, thereby preventing unfiltered “noise” from reaching the EOC.

Beyond the most general job description for the Emergency Manager (Incident Commander), whose responsibilities include interaction with the community, I found no specific mention of what ICS position would be tasked with the how, when, or by what means to communicate with the community and how that involvement would be facilitated.

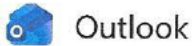
I believe that this omission could be serious. Not only might it disenfranchise volunteer organizations and their members, but it also telegraphs a “political” message to the public that the section on the City’s commitment to Community Engagement is disingenuous. This is not a stretch. I am aware that inclusion of meaningful and valuable service from volunteer emergency organizations has been an issue for at least a decade. And, as a 27-year resident of Sebastopol, I am aware of the financial, political, and staffing issues that our City has faced. Likewise, I am aware that the efforts to evolve a new EOP have been a protracted and challenging affair.

Respectfully, my expertise and focus are limited. Thus, my comments may be perceived as unsupportive of the Plan. I am grateful that the City is, at last, evolving a new comprehensive EOP.

Sincerely,



Sebastopol, CA 95472



FW: EOP: Community Engagement

From City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Date Wed 4/15/2026 8:20 PM
To Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

1 attachment (15 KB)
Community Engagement.docx;

Please see public comment as it relates to an agenda item on an upcoming city council meeting.
BCC: Email BCC to City Council, City Attorney
City staff that received this email are listed in the CC distribution line as noted above.
City Staff: Please Post to City Website
Thank you
Mary Gourley
Interim City Manager

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 7:57 PM
To: Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: EOP: Community Engagement

Chief McDonagh and Council members-

Attached please find suggestions for the Community Engagement section of the proposed Sebastopol Emergency Operations Plan.

I am a member of Meet Your Neighbors West County. These edits accurately portray MYNWC involvement with preparedness and its role during an actual event, which is distinctly different from the other volunteer groups mentioned.

Thank you for considering. I am glad to discuss if there are questions.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

Community Engagement

Sebastopol relies on strong community partnerships to enhance preparedness, response, and short-term recovery. ~~Organized volunteer groups include but are not limited to FEMA Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit (SNCU), and Meet Your Neighbors West County (MYNWC), which serve as essential extensions of the city's emergency capability.~~

~~These groups~~ operate under the direction of the Sebastopol EOC if and when activated. The Director of Emergency Management for the city will correspond directly with the point of contact for the respective volunteer group if their involvement is determined necessary for the specific emergency.

Volunteers may assist with neighborhood-level situational awareness, welfare checks, basic first aid within their training, staffing of resource distribution points, and delivery of verified public information.

These community volunteers do not self-deploy. Activation, tasking, logging participation and activities occur through the EOC to ensure accountability, shared operational and mission objectives, safety, and coordinated operations across departments.

The mission of Meet Your Neighbors West County (MYNWC) is to develop neighborhood emergency preparedness and resilience relevant to west county's needs, priorities and changing climate. During the first moments of an emergency, they self-deploy to determine next steps, assuming First Responders will need to focus on more seriously impacted areas. The MYNWC "neighborhoods," determined mainly based on proximity, collaborate to be as self-sufficient as possible whether sheltering in place or preparing to evacuate.



Comments for the proposed EOP

From [redacted]
Date Mon 4/20/2026 5:23 PM
To Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Under "Activation Protocols"

Further definition needed for "partner" "primary" contact . From my perspective, SNCU Hub contacts.

Community Engagement paragraph 2

Define how "Director of Emergency Management" "will correspond "directly" with "point of contact".

How determined? By what avenue? If all standard means of communication are unavailable?

Paragraph 3

Please resolve the statements "Volunteers may assist" is apparently contradicted by

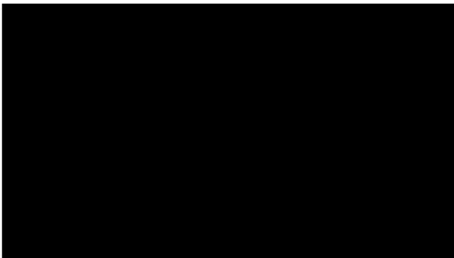
paragraph 4

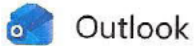
"Community volunteers do not self deploy".

It is SNCU's community commitment to facilitate neighborhood communication by standing up our stations to all traffic from the radio community during storms, power outages etc. to practice local radio skills. When the walls start shaking, even before an official declaration, we will have our radios available for the public, helping neighbors help themselves.

Thank you to all involved parties for the effort to keep us safe and connected .

Respectfully submitted





FW: New Feedback by haikuspirit@gmail.com

From info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Date Sat 4/25/2026 5:45 PM

To Sean McDonagh <smcdonagh@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Andrew Bauer <abauer@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Cc Alex Mog <alex.mog@redwoodpubliclaw.com>

Please see below. Please attach to agenda item for public comments for agenda item when it comes to the CC.

From: City of Sebastopol <noreply@cityofsebastopol.org>

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 4:04 PM

To: smehta@planeteria.com; info <info@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Subject: New Feedback by [REDACTED]

Describe the Issue

Comments for City Of Sebastopol emergency operations plan

Thank you for the invitation to review and offer comments. At this time, my comments are directed toward the community engagement section of the document:

There are some already organized, and maybe yet to be formed, community groups that are organized around neighbors helping neighbors, and these could include some things that need to be done in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. In the case of meet your neighbor MYN, that I have experience with, it is not meant to replace or get in the way of all of the responses that are coordinated through the emergency operations plan and incident command, and so forth, I don't know how you can meaningfully acknowledge the existence of such groups ... and not include them as part of the group "acting on their own" and still impressed upon everyone equally the importance of the command structure, decision-making, response and so forth.

In the case of MYN, with which I'm familiar, it'll be really important to not inhibit the ability these of these groups and these community members to act in the way that they are trained to do within the scope of the organization. The understanding at all times can and should be the incident command structure from mitigation to response through recovery and Beyond. This group is a good community partner ... we want them to act meaningfully and responsibly and not at the expense of or interference with the IC. I don't consider this an easy ask, but I do believe it's an important consideration.

Email

[REDACTED]

Url of page

<https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/2026-emergency-operations-plan-eop-draft-for-public-review/>

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) INFORMATION

“UNREQUESTED RESOURCES”

Unrequested Resources

Agenda Item Number: 12

During incidents, responders sometimes come to an incident area without being requested. Such personnel converging on a site, commonly referred to as self-dispatching or self-deploying, may interfere with incident management and place an extra logistical and management burden on an already stressed system by:

- Creating additional supervisory, logistical, and safety needs;
- Depleting the resources needed to provide continued services to their home community;
- Complicating resource tracking and accountability; and/or
- Interfering with the access of formally requested resources.

Responders should wait for official deployment notification rather than self-deploying to an incident.

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Mobilizing

Personnel and other resources begin mobilizing when notified by the requesting jurisdiction or by an intermediary acting on its behalf, such as the state Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) coordinator. At the time of notification, deploying personnel should be notified regarding:

- The date, time, and place of departure;
- Mode of transportation to the incident;
- Estimated date and time of arrival;
- Reporting location (address, position title, and phone number or radio frequency);
- Anticipated incident assignment;
- Anticipated duration of deployment;
- Resource order number;
- Incident number; and
- Applicable cost and funding codes.

Resource tracking directly links to the mobilization process. Resources arriving on scene check in according to the receiving organization's check-in process.

The mobilization process includes:

- Conducting incident-specific deployment planning;
- Equipping;
- Providing just-in-time training;
- Designating assembly points; and
- Delivering resources to the incident on schedule and in line with priorities and budgets.

Mobilizing fixed facility resources, such as laboratories, hospitals, EOCs, shelters, and waste management systems, involves activation rather than deployment. Plans and systems to monitor resource mobilization status should be flexible enough to adapt to both types of resources. Managers plan and prepare for the demobilization process at the same time they begin mobilizing resources.

Survivors as Resources

Before emergency responders can mobilize and arrive, neighbors and bystanders are often the first people to provide life-saving assistance. The natural desire to help does not disappear once responders arrive on the scene. Incident management personnel should anticipate this and have plans to use these volunteers' capabilities safely and effectively.

Private and Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary organizations, such as the American Red Cross or Medical Reserve Corps, also mobilize and provide valuable assistance before, during, and after incidents. These groups provide a structure to integrate volunteers into incident activities. They also frequently have established relationships with the community, provide assistance that governmental organizations cannot, and support requests through formal resource-ordering processes.

Tracking and Reporting

Incident managers use established procedures to track resources from mobilization through demobilization. Resource tracking occurs prior to, during, and after an incident. This process helps staff prepare to receive and use resources; tracks resource location; facilitates the safety and security of personnel, equipment, teams, and facilities; and enables effective resource coordination and movement.

Dispatch/Deployment

Agenda Item Number: 12

Resources should deploy only when appropriate authorities request and dispatch them through established resource management systems. Resources that authorities do not request should refrain from spontaneous deployment to avoid overburdening the recipient and compounding accountability challenges.

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NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) INFORMATION

“ELECTED OFFICIALS”

in EOCs should be accomplished during the emergency operations planning process. Factors to consider include the authorities and responsibilities of various organizations, the resources and information the organizations have or have access to, and the organizations' expertise and relationships. The composition of EOC teams may also vary depending on the nature and complexity of the incident or situation.

Regardless of which organizations are represented, all EOC teams receive oversight from elected and/or appointed officials such as governors, tribal leaders, mayors, and city managers. These individuals may be present in the EOC, but more often provide guidance from elsewhere, either as part of a formal policy group or individually. They typically make decisions regarding priorities and on issues such as emergency declarations, large-scale evacuations, access to extraordinary emergency funding, waivers to ordinances and regulations, and adjudication of scarce resources.

Activation Levels

Agenda Item Number: 12

The level of activity within an EOC often grows as the size, scope, and complexity of the incident grow. If the incident management efforts require additional support and coordination, the EOC director may activate additional staff to involve more disciplines, mobilize additional

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National Incident Management System

resources, inform the public, address media inquiries, involve senior elected and appointed officials, and request outside assistance.

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Elected and appointed officials are key players in incident management. They are responsible for the safety and welfare of their constituents and the overall effectiveness of incident management efforts. Governors, tribal leaders, mayors, city managers, and county commissioners, for example, typically comprise the policy level of incident management and provide guidance regarding priorities and strategies for dealing with incident response and recovery. Incident personnel working in EOCs and on scene share the responsibility for keeping elected and appointed officials informed regarding the situation, resource needs, and other pertinent information. Effective communication between these incident personnel and policy-level officials fosters trust and helps ensure that all leaders have the information they need to make informed decisions. MAC Groups provide a way to organize policy-level officials to enhance unity of effort at this senior level.

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) INFORMATION

“PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER”

PIOs are key members of ICS and EOC organizations, and they frequently work closely with senior officials represented in MAC Groups. If the PIO position is staffed at both the ICP and a supporting EOC, the PIOs maintain close contact through pre-established JIS protocols. PIOs advise the Incident Commander, Unified Command, or EOC director on public information matters relating to the management of the incident. PIOs also handle inquiries from the media, the public, and elected officials; public information and warnings; rumor monitoring and response; media relations; and other functions needed to gather, verify, coordinate, and

National Incident Management System

disseminate accurate, accessible, and timely information. Information on public health, safety, and protection is of particular importance. The PIO also monitors the media and other sources of public information and transmits relevant information to the appropriate personnel at the incident, EOC, and/or in a MAC Group.

PIOs create coordinated and consistent messages by collaborating to:

- Identify key information to be communicated to the public;
- Craft clear messages that all can understand, including individuals with Limited English Proficiency, those with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs;¹⁸
- Prioritize messages to ensure timely delivery of information without overwhelming the audience;
- Verify accuracy of information; and
- Disseminate messages using the most effective means.