



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



Special Emergency Services Council Committee Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2026

This meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Vice Chair Medina.

I. Roll Call

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|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Atherton | Council Member Bill Widmer | Present |
| Belmont | Council Member McCune | Not Present |
| Brisbane | Council Member Lentz | Not Present |
| Burlingame | Council Member Pappajohn | Present |
| Colma | Council Member Slaughter | Present |
| Daly City | Council Member Sylvester | Present |
| East Palo Alto | Council Member Dinan | Present |
| Foster City | Council Member Niederhofer | Present |
| Half Moon Bay | Council Member Jonsson | Not Present |
| Hillsborough | Council Member Chuang | Present |
| Menlo Park | Council Member Combs | Not Present |
| Millbrae | Council Member Rainaldi | Present |
| Pacifica | Council Member Boles | Not Present |
| Portola Valley | Council Member Hufty | Present |
| Redwood City | Council Member Eakin | Present |
| San Bruno | Council Vice Chair Medina | Present |
| San Carlos | Council Member Dugan | Not Present |
| San Mateo | Council Member Newsom | Present |
| South San Francisco | Council Member Nicolas | Present |
| Woodside | Council Member Goeld | Present |
| County of San Mateo | Council Chair Mueller | Not Present |

Attending County Representatives:

- Deputy County Executive Calderon, County Executive's Office
- Director Dhapodkar, Department of Emergency Management
- Assistant Director Reynolds, Department of Emergency Management
- Clerk of the Committee Corteway, Department of Emergency Management
- Secretary of the Committee Haddad, Department of Emergency Management

II. Action to Set Agenda and Approve September 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes

- Vice Chair Medina stated this was a special Emergency Services Council meeting. The agenda is limited to the specific items noticed for the meeting and public comments related to those items in accordance with the Brown Act. The usual agenda items for public comment (non-agendized matters), correspondence and announcements, and Council report-outs have been omitted and will not be heard during this meeting.
- The Council approved the September 17, 2025, meeting minutes without objection or abstention.

III. Sheriff's Office Presentation

- Undersheriff Hsiung conveyed the Sheriff's Office spirit of collaboration in working with the Emergency Services Council (ESC).
- Lieutenant Young of the Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Bureau (ESB) explained that the Bureau is the lead law enforcement coordinator for major events, critical incidents, and specialized activities. ESB's mission is to safeguard lives and property by coordinating law enforcement resources and equipment to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the effects of disasters and critical incidents. He added that ESB is open 24/7 and is comprised of specialized sworn units and 12 highly skilled volunteer units.
- For the past several months, ESB has coordinated with federal and local agencies on the upcoming Super Bowl LX (SBLX) and FIFA events. ESB is coordinating with law enforcement from San Francisco down to Santa Clara County, as well as the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center (NCRIC).
- The Sheriff's Office operational period for SBLX is February 1 – 9. The operational period for FIFA events is from June 11 – July 1. FIFA's longer operational period will require Sheriff Deputies to be on duty, and the Sheriff's Office will reach out to cities and towns to request additional police support. The Sheriff's Office expects approximately 500,000 visitors.
- The Sheriff's Office will focus its presence around Caltrain because of expected ridership through San Mateo County to and from the six FIFA events. Motor units and dirt bikes will ride along the Caltrain rail line. The Lieutenant confirmed that the Sheriff's Office and law enforcement "are going to be everywhere". He also confirmed that hotels hosting teams will be staffed by law enforcement 24/7.
- Daly City Council Member thanked the Sheriff's Office for the collaboration and mutual aid with local police. Further, he asked if the California Highway Patrol (CHP) would be incorporated with the ongoing mutual aid for escorts. Lieutenant Young confirmed that CHP will be the lead for escorts, with support from the Sheriff's Office.
- Hillsborough Council Member asked about the training requirements for the 400 ESB volunteers, as ESB hosts the largest volunteer unit in the Sheriff's Office. The Lieutenant confirmed there is a rigorous process for volunteers, including a background check, testing by their unit, and a probationary period.
- Hillsborough Council Member emphasized the important role of local officials in supporting clear and consistent public messaging, particularly in the case of an incident. The Lieutenant confirmed the Sheriff's Office is working with the National Football League (NFL), San Mateo County, and federal agencies to consolidate messages.
- Director Dhapodkar confirmed the Joint Information Center (JIC) will be opened at the Regional Operations Center for SBLX.

- Director Dhapodkar noted San Mateo County Emergency Management (SMC EM) will be presenting to City Managers in February on how the Department is working with the Sheriff's Office, San Mateo County Executive's Office (CEO), and Fire Chiefs to create a five-element framework to make templates, statements and press releases on the same thread so public information officers (PIOs) from law enforcement and fire departments are saying the same thing across agencies.
- The Sheriff's Office Director of Communications, Gretchen Spiker, highlighted that there has been close coordination among the PIO offices of San Mateo County, San Francisco City and County, and Santa Clara over the past year to ensure coordinated messaging in the wider region. PIOs are focused on ensuring people are prepared and know how to sign up for emergency alerts to access information.
- Burlingame Council Member asked what information is being shared with visitors about alerts and warnings before SBLX and FIFA events. Director Spiker responded that SMC alerts are specific to emergencies, and PIOs will focus on social media posts and local media outlets to reach visitors.

IV. 2026 SBLX Readiness

- San Mateo County Emergency Management (SMC EM) Operations Manager Corteway reported that SMC EM is assisting the Sheriff's Office and each city and town with coordination and monitoring support for SBLX.
- During SBLX, the SMC EM Assistant Director will be embedded at the San Jose Emergency Operations Center (EOC), where there will be a large operational footprint. SMC EM Operations Manager Corteway will be on virtual channels reporting out in real time with law enforcement, fire departments, and county emergency medical services (EMS). SMC EOC will be activated to monitor fire and police calls, as well as any surges, to ensure resources are directed appropriately.
- Redwood City Council Member asked what keeps SMC EM up at night in anticipation of these events. SMC EM Operations Manager Corteway responded that an unexpected weather or world event impacting public reaction may create more unknown during such an event. However, SBLX is considered a top-tier Special Event Assessment Rating 1 (SEAR) event by the federal government, and local mutual aid agreements are in place to respond.
- Redwood City Council Member asked what message to send to community members to keep them safe ahead of the Super Bowl. SMC EM Operations Manager Corteway recommended anticipating heavy traffic and personal preparedness for an emergency – have medication, food supply, water, and a go bag just in case.

V. 2025 SFO Full-Scale Exercise Presentation

- San Francisco International Airport (SFO) SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh explained that the airport is regulated by many different federal agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which conducts an annual audit on SFO's emergency plan.
- SFO Emergency Management is responsible for developing the SFO emergency plan, updating the plan, completing annual training, and conducting full-scale emergency drills that include at least 100 people. SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh noted that SFO does exercises annually to maintain the highest level of preparedness.

In 2025, SFO conducted a water rescue exercise because it was high on the FAA's list for assessment during its audit.

- As a lesson learned, SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh highlighted that the next exercise will open a JIC to emulate a real emergency. SFO Emergency Management is now working on a tabletop exercise around public messaging and recovery.
- Millbrae Council Member expressed a strong interest in joining the next full-scale exercise and asked if the exercise is open to elected officials. Millbrae Council Member also emphasized the importance of public messaging about these exercises to avoid creating false alarms in neighboring areas. SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh added that SFO chartered a boat for a few elected officials during the exercise and confirmed that elected officials are welcome to join.
- Foster City Council Member asked if the equipment used during the exercise belonged to SFO or to others. SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh clarified that the SFO marine response facility is limited, and most of the equipment was brought by responding agencies.
- City of San Mateo Council Member said the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department gets a lot of questions about who should be first on scene to respond to incidents involving kite surfers who hit the San Mateo Bridge. City of San Mateo Council Member asked about response expectations if a plane goes down, including who is responsible for water rescue and initiating mutual aid. SFO Emergency Management Coordinator Hsieh said FAA expects SFO to be responsible for the 2-mile perimeter around the airport. SFO recognizes that the Coast Guard has robust rescue capabilities and many plans. Even if SFO is first on the scene, the Coast Guard will arrive to respond.

VI. Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement

- Director Dhapodkar confirmed that after more than a year, the JPA has been completed, and the City Clerks have the signed version. It will be posted to the SMC EM website soon.

VII. Updated Recommended 2026 Meeting Calendar – VOTE REQUIRED

- Motion by Hillsborough Council Member. Foster City Council Member seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

VIII. Recommended 2027 Meeting Calendar – VOTE REQUIRED

- Motion by Daly City Council Member. Millbrae Council Member seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

IX. Director's 2026 Outlook

- SMC EM Director Dhapodkar spoke with Council Members before the meeting and found that the majority of Council Members feel multijurisdictional coordination is the greatest challenge for emergency management in the County. Council Members emphasized the importance of crisis communications and consistent messaging because people don't act if there is hesitancy, which increases the likelihood of injury and death in emergencies. The Director highlighted that more collaborative work is needed to address this issue.
- Public complacency is also a concern for emergency management in the County, as many Council Members recognize there is a false sense of security and perception

among residents that personal preparedness takes too much time and energy. Other challenges for emergency management in the County are misperceived risk priorities and equity gaps in preparedness.

- Director Dhapodkar outlined SMC EM's community readiness plans for 2026. She added that community readiness involves getting the word out to the community about how to prepare for emergencies. In 2025, SMC EM's Community Outreach Coordinator led more than 30 community events.
- SMC EM will continue to focus on public information, supporting law and fire to deliver consistent aligned messaging. As part of community readiness, SMC EM is working to build Community Resilience Centers (CRCs) with the libraries, and the Council will hear more about them during the year.
- SMC EM has prioritized community-based organization (CBO) collaboration. CBOs are trusted agents, and they serve as the last mile getting citizens prepared. SMC EM is now working with CBOs to create a regional structure that facilitates information exchange. coordination among CBOs and SMC EM. Director Dhapodkar reported that previously, the Department did not have a direct line to CBOs. SMC EM invited 44 CBOs for a listening session and has since continued to create CBO connections.
- SMC EM recognizes planning as the backbone of emergency management. Director Dhapodkar stated that the three big plans SMC EM is working on – the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and All Hazards Evacuation Plan (AHEP) - will not be binders sitting on shelves, but pre-negotiated decisions on roles and responsibilities.
- Two years ago, the ESC put AHEP forward. SMC EM has since completed the base plan and is now working with police and fire chiefs on a operational framework. SMC EM will continue to operationalize, socialize, and exercise AHEP in May for unified command.
- Director Dhapodkar outlined SMC EM's training and exercise outlook for 2026. The Director underlined the importance of building muscle memory to prepare for emergencies. SMC EM will continue alert and warning trainings, getting fire, law, and PIOs together in one room on a regular basis to practice sending SMC alerts. Training was recently conducted for South San Francisco and East Palo Alto. SMC EM will host two major exercises in 2025 – Golden Eagle in May and the Great ShakeOut earthquake scenario in October.
- SMC EM recently completed a public survey to better understand what community needs are before, during, and after emergencies. Director Dhapodkar emphasized the importance of understanding county residents' expectations to effectively educate the public on emergency readiness and response through a whole community approach.
- Director Dhapodkar highlighted that SMC EM's strategic plan and five key commitments are built on listening. Director Dhapodkar asked the ESC how Council Members would help SMC EM champion the Department's strategic plan and make an impact on their communities.
- Woodside Council Member thanked Director Dhapodkar for elevating the professionalism of the ESC and underlined how ineffective crisis communications risk losing credibility.
- East Palo Alto Council Member asked how the changing landscape at the national and federal level is affecting the County. The Director Dhapodkar responded that SMC EM is following the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Counsel closely and

confirmed the federal landscape is continuing to change, and we must reflect on what we can do locally, such as working with CBOs.

X. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.