COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Services Council Committee Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2026

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

I. Roll Call

Atherton	Council Member Widmer	Present
Belmont	Council Member McCune	Present
Brisbane	Council Member Lentz	Present
Burlingame	Council Member Pappajohn	Present
Colma	Council Member Slaughter	Present
Daly City	Council Member Sylvester	Present
East Palo Alto	Council Member Barragan	Not Present
Foster City	Council Member Niederhofer	Present
Half Moon Bay	Council Member Jonsson	Present
Hillsborough	Council Member Chuang	Present
Menlo Park	Council Member Combs	Not Present
Millbrae	Council Member Rainaldi	Present
Pacifica	Council Member Boles	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	Present
San Mateo	Council Member Newsom	Not Present
South San Francisco	Council Member Flores	Present
Woodside	Council Member Goeld	Present
County of San Mateo	Council Chair Mueller	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. Public Comments, Correspondence, and Announcements

- No public comments or announcements.

III. Action to Set Agenda and Approve April 30, 2026 Meeting Minutes

- Millbrae Council Member made the recommendation to approve the January 29, 2026, meeting minutes, and the Hillsborough Council Member seconded. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Wildfire Season Outlook & Countywide Mitigation Efforts

- Director Dhapodkar provided an overview of the California Fire Safe Council and the coordination significant wildfire mitigation efforts underway across the County to reduce wildfire risk and strengthen community resilience.
- Director Dhapodkar noted that San Mateo County residents consistently identify wildfire as a top risk. She recognized the work of multi-jurisdictional partners implementing risk-reduction projects and introduced panelists to provide an overview of their ongoing wildfire mitigation work.

Cal Fire – Santa Cruz Unit

- San Mateo County Fire Chief Wilson provided an overview of the wildfire outlook, resources, and Cal Fire's fire mitigation efforts, including updated helicopters capabilities, the opening of Cal Fire's Camp Glenwood, and regular evacuation exercises in coordination with law partners.
- Since 2024, Cal Fire has removed and thinned more than 115 acres of vegetation and conducted prescribed burns on 215 acres of land to support fuel reduction.
- Chief Wilson underlined the importance of public preparedness education, including signing up for SMC Alert, maintaining go-bags, clearly addressing homes, creating defensible space, hardening homes, and maintaining evacuation routes. Chief Wilson affirmed San Mateo County is not immune to fires, pointing to the CZU example.
- Camp Glenwood is staffed with two crews for nine months of the year and supports an adult education and career training partnership with the San Mateo County Office of Education.
- Cal Fire recently deployed a team and resources to Washington state to respond to wildfires.

San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD)

- RCD is a special district with the mission to help people help the land. RCD works with landowners to connect the dots, secure grant funding, and implement conservation programming. RCD is largely grant funded. Since 2019, RCD has received $25 million in grants, including $18 million from Cal Fire.
- RCD explained that vegetation treatments break up dense forests and create horizontal and vertical separation, making wildfires safer and easier to manage.
- RCD affirmed it is open to working with all partners, as relationship building is critical to addressing wildfire and environmental risks.

- RCD identified San Bruno Mountain wildfire mitigation as a regional priority and is pursuing funding for two fuel-reduction projects benefiting South San Francisco, Brisbane, Daly City, and Colma.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space

- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space manages 36,000 acres in San Mateo County, including 150 miles of fire and emergency access routes and more than 100 structures. Maintaining emergency access is a key priority, as demonstrated during the CZU Fires. Midpeninsula Open Space hosts two resource management crews and conducts environmentally sensitive work.
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space explained that forest resilience work balances fuel reduction with ecological restoration by pruning trees, clearing brush, and managing invasive species while protecting native vegetation. The agency emphasized the need for forest restoration alongside fuel reduction.
- Midpeninsula Open Space highlighted the criticality of partnerships for effective fire mitigation and management work, including grants from Cal Fire. The agency affirmed that in the county's regional landscape, the variety of fire mitigation partners all bring different strengths.

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)

- SFPUC identified partnerships and multi-jurisdictional collaboration as a top priority for wildfire mitigation, with a focus on coordinating projects across jurisdictional boundaries.
- SFPUC emphasized the importance of building relationships, coordinating communications, and establishing community trust before an emergency occurs.

Caltrans

- Since 2020, Caltrans has increased funding for fuel reduction and vegetation management, using in-house crews and service contracts to maintain roadside clearance in fire severity zones and reduce highway fire risk.
- Caltrans has prioritized partnerships and community outreach to develop vegetation management plans along highways that cross multiple jurisdictions and landscapes.

Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)

- PG&E highlighted its wildfire mitigation efforts, including undergrounding and covering power lines, vegetation management, and tree trimming near power lines.
- PG&E created a dedicated position to strengthen vegetation management coordination with cities and local and state agencies.
- PG&E explained that enhanced powerlines automatically de-energize when contacted by a tree branch or other object, reducing the risk of ignition.
- Chair Mueller commended the agencies for their fire mitigation work and expressed appreciation for their partnerships with his office. Chair Mueller highlighted Camp Glenwood, PG&E's progress on undergrounding power lines, and Caltrans' fuel-reduction projects as significant improvements to wildfire prevention in the County.

V. HazMat Program Update

- Assistant Director Reynolds updated the ESC on the status of the county's HazMat replacement planning. The county is serviced by one primary HazMat response truck that is aging out and needs to be replaced. A new HazMat vehicle will cost an estimated $2 million and take 47 months to build.
- The ESC considered two funding options for vehicle replacement over FY 2027–2030: Option A, maintaining a $50,000 Trust Fund balance with an estimated annual ESC member budget allocation of 2.7% to close funding gaps, and Option C, maintaining a $50,000 balance with an estimated 3.7% annual budget increase for all ESC members.
- Hillsborough moved to approve Option A, seconded by Colma. The motion passed unanimously, with San Carlos abstaining.

VI. Severe Winter Storm Readiness

- Emergency Management Coordinator McCall provided an overview of severe winter weather. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center forecasts an 81% chance of a very strong El Niño from October through December 2026 and a 97% chance that El Niño conditions will persist through early spring 2027. This could result in above-normal rainfall in the Bay Area.
- Coordinator McCall emphasized that SMC EM is taking severe winter weather seriously and has increased monitoring. SMC EM will bring experts to the October ESC meeting to provide additional updates.
- Coordinator McCall recommended three approaches to winter storm readiness. First, residents should prioritize basic personal mitigation measures, including clearing drains and gutters, obtaining sandbags if their property has a history of flooding, and ensuring adequate property drainage. Second, cities should coordinate with internal stakeholders, identify flood-prone areas, and share preparedness actions with their communities. Third, residents should register for SMC Alert to receive emergency information.
- Director Dhapodkar stated that SMC EM raises winter storm readiness with stakeholders annually and has begun these conversations earlier each year. She confirmed that SMC EM will host coordination calls with cities to discuss preparedness activities and distribute a communications toolkit for cities to inform residents on mitigation measures. Director Dhapodkar also confirmed that SMC EM will distribute information ahead of storms and host operational areas coordination calls as needed.
- Chair Mueller inquired about the status of dams in the county and emphasized the importance of sandbags for flood mitigation. Deputy County Executive Calderon confirmed that the County has already ordered 75,000 sandbags, an increase from its annual order of 60,000. Director Dhapodkar clarified that County-purchased sandbags are intended for unincorporated areas but may be provided to cities during an emergency, as was done for Portola Valley last year.
- The Brisbane Council Member asked whether the County could coordinate bulk sandbag procurement for cities that may not place orders in time. Director Dhapodkar stated that she will discuss winter weather readiness and sandbag procurement with city emergency managers.

VII. Report Outs Related to Emergency Services Council

- Director Dhapodkar clarified that the County will cover half of the cost of the new HazMat vehicle, with cities' contributions calculated based on population and tax roll data.

VIII. Adjournment

- Chair Mueller adjourned the meeting at 7:02 PM.