



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

October 27, 2021

Honorable Members of the City Council
c/o City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: REPORT BACK FOR VICTIM COMPENSATION IN CITY-CAUSED DISASTERS (CF: 21-0911)

SUMMARY

On August 11, 2021, the City Council instructed the Civil, Human Rights and Equity Department (CHRED) to provide an equity framework that can be used by all departments to provide equitable victim compensation in the event of a city-caused event or disaster. This report makes recommendations on: (1) communication and coordination between departments, (2) establishing an emergency response equity framework, and (3) identifying resources for services and accommodations needed in local emergencies, events, or disasters.

CHRED conducted a thorough analysis of the Los Angeles Police Department's 27th and San Pedro After Action Report (June 30, 2021), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) Report of Investigation, and held conversations with the Emergency Management Department (EMD), the Community Investment for Families Department (CIFD), and the Los Angeles Sanitation Department (LA Sanitation) to identify these recommendations.

BACKGROUND

On Wednesday, June 30, 2021, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) responded to residents' calls about illegal fireworks being stored at a home on the 700 Block of East 27th Street in the Historic South Central Los Angeles neighborhood. At the location, officers found thousands of pounds of illegal fireworks, including improvised explosive devices. To dispose of the illegal explosives, LAPD transported some fireworks to another location and used a special LAPD Total Containment Vehicle (TCV), which contains an iron chamber, to detonate the remaining explosives. LAPD established a 300-foot parameter to the north and south end of 27th Street. Furthermore, according to the LAPD, officers

conducted door-to-door evacuation outreach prior to the blast, alerting residents of the imminent detonation.¹

LAPD detonated the explosives on 27th Street in the TCV which could not withstand that blast and resulted in the hospitalization of six residents, ten LAPD officers, and one federal ATF officer. There was extensive damage to residents' homes, cars and businesses including the destruction of 13 businesses, 22 residential properties, and 37 vehicles. The total costs of the damages have not been determined or reported. Additionally, two senior adults who lived on the street and suffered damage to their homes from the blast have since died.

Preliminary findings by the ATF, indicate that the LAPD Bomb Squad's TCV was loaded with 42 pounds of explosives instead of the 16.5 pounds initially estimated by the LAPD. This maxed out the detonation chamber's capacity of 25 pounds, causing the truck to explode.²

On July 1, 2021, one day following the incident, Council District 9, with assistance from the EMD, began implementing recovery efforts for victims including emergency housing, three meals per day, and basic necessities including clothing, medical items, and supplies. Additionally, EMD activated their Emergency Operations Center to a Level III Activation. At 1815 hours, the Emergency Operations Center held an activation call with personnel from EMD, American Red Cross, Department on Disability, LAPD, Los Angeles Fire Department, Recreation and Parks Department, Council District (CD) 9 Representatives, Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management, and the Unified Homeless Resource Center-Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (UHRC-LAHSAs).

Furthermore, the CIFD has been an active partner in the community recovery. At the request of Councilmember Price, CIFD, in partnership with the lead FamilySource Center for the area and All Peoples Community Center (APCC), spearheaded efforts to coordinate and secure housing and supportive services for those residents most impacted by the incident. Those services included coordination of hotel vouchers, case management, mental health linkages, food pantry distributions, medical services, and at minimum weekly follow-ups.

APCC has been a crucial partner in the recovery process. Their long-standing history and understanding of the community have provided a safe refuge for these impacted residents. A dedicated APCC staff member, acting as a Tenant Stability Advisor, oversees all case management efforts. The Tenant Stability Advisor met with clients off-site at the hotel and successfully connected residents with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, St. John's Well Child and Family Center, and coordinated efforts to house residents through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. APCC and CIFD have ongoing coordinated communications and data collection regarding all of the residents residing at the hotel.

The CIFD has also played an essential role in coordinating the distribution of hotel vouchers. A dedicated CIFD staff member manages all residents residing at the hotel while housing inspectors and engineers work to assess and repair homes impacted by the explosion. The CIFD staff, under the

¹ <http://lapd-assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/1final-rpt-tcv-redacted.pdf>

² http://lapd-assets.lapdonline.org/assets/pdf/27th_st_after_action_rpt.pdf

leadership of the CIFD General Manager and the Director of Program Operations, act as the liaison between the City and the hotel staff, manages the budget, and maintains ongoing communications with the CD 9 office.

LA Sanitation Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant - Sewage Spill (2021)

On July 11, 2021, the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant became inundated with overwhelming quantities of debris, causing backup of the headworks facilities. The plant's relief system was triggered and wastewater overflows were controlled through use of the plant's one-mile outfall system, which resulted in the discharge of untreated wastewater into Santa Monica Bay. Normally, the discharge of secondary-treated effluent runs through the five-mile outfall. During the over eight hours of discharge through the one-mile outfall, approximately 17 million gallons of wastewater (representing six percent of an average daily load) was discharged as a controlled emergency measure through its one-mile outfall relief system to prevent the plant from going completely offline and discharging much more untreated wastewater. The overflow of wastewater was through the one-mile outfall rather than the five-mile outfall because the plant's internal storm drains are connected to the one-mile outfall to ensure stormwater flows did not overwhelm wastewater treatment processes.

LA Sanitation could not fully move the sludge until about three weeks after the initial crisis, which officials have said was the cause of a strong stench El Segundo residents have had to deal with. Officials have said the stench will abate over time. In response to the city-caused disaster, an assistance program was established by LA Sanitation to reimburse residents for an air conditioning unit up to \$1,200 or hotel stays at \$182 per night, with a \$66 per diem per household member. The department provided extensive and consistent communication with residents through its website, virtual town halls, social media platforms, and a 24-hour Customer Care Center line where residents could file a complaint or express specific concerns. LA Sanitation leveraged resources from its operations and management budget to stand up the reimbursement program about 11 days following the spill. The department received additional funding through action taken by the Board of Public Works.

Analysis of City Response to City-caused disasters

Both incidents highlighted in this report demonstrate that the City may consider developing a plan to address city-caused disasters that impose significant damage and inconvenience to living and working conditions for residents and businesses. Specifically, the plan should highlight equity and provide emergency resources to departments which would enable immediate equitable responses to city-caused disasters. Proper funding is needed to effectively implement this equity framework. Therefore, CHRED recommends the following actions:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a \$10 million special fund for city-caused emergencies for all non-proprietary city departments to procure emergency food, housing, supplies, and transportation resources; and, to support local non-profit stakeholders in their efforts to engage in community outreach and case management support.

2. Instruct proprietary departments to create special funds to respond to city-caused emergencies to procure housing, food, and transportation resources; as well as, to support local non-profit stakeholders in their efforts to engage in community outreach and case management support.
3. Instruct City departments to utilize the City Emergency Response Equity Assessment Tool, which is detailed in Table 1, during city-caused disasters to ensure equity is centered, communicated, and coordinated between city departments and community stakeholders.
4. Amend the City’s General Plan to include an Emergency Response Coordination plan for each Community Plan Area.

Table 1:

City Emergency Response Equity Assessment Tool
<p>Los Angeles City Departments are encouraged to develop an emergency response plan to prepare for city-caused disasters, employing this equity assessment tool. Each department must create a system of checks and balances to ensure that equity is centered in the department's emergency response.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Center equity by immediately engaging community-based organizations, particularly culturally-specific organizations, at the decision making table. ● Communicate critical information to residents that considers language access and literacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multilingual community members must have materials and communication translated in a clear, culturally appropriate, and linguistic way that is responsive to the impacted community (i.e. culturally specific media outlets, door-to-door canvassing, town hall meetings, flyers). ○ Coordinate emergency response information in usable handheld formats like refrigerator magnets, wallerts, flyers, and business cards. ○ Communication includes ensuring people with disabilities have access to information in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. ○ Collaborate with organizations who have trusted relationships with the impacted communities. ○ Provide tools and resources to communicate with residents affected by the digital divide, including seniors and community households without internet access. ● Coordinate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage the Emergency Management Department and relevant elected offices to ensure a comprehensive City response to the emergency or event. ○ Establish a clear channel of communication between relevant departments and offices. ○ Coordinate with the relevant government agencies who also have jurisdictional oversight within the affected community. ○ Decide on the office or department that will take the leadership role in communicating with the community. All other departments and offices will support the effort with relevant information, translation services, and on-the-ground community engagement personnel.

- **Eligibility Expansion**

- Expanding forms of documentation to prove ownership/occupancy for homeowners and renters
- Accept motor vehicle registrations, documentation including letters from local schools (public or private), federal or state benefit providers, social service organizations (such as community assistance programs and non-profits), or court documents.
- Accept a public official’s letter for receipts of major repairs or improvements to verify ownership. Survivors with heirship properties, mobile homes or travel trailers, who do not have the traditional documentation of ownership verification, may self-certify ownership as a last resort.

Conduct a community assessment overview to inform what emergency response measures are necessary. Some disaster incidents will require more detailed information than what is provided through general monitoring. This assessment will inform departments’ consideration of the community's cultural and linguistic sensitivities as well as available local assets to leverage in the emergency response.

Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race/Ethnicity of affected population ● Income levels of affected population ● Age of affected populations
Statistical Information (number of)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Injuries ● Deaths ● Hospitalizations ● Evacuated ● Displaced
Emergency Housing Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of Hotels / Motels Partnerships ● Number of Emergency Shelters ● Number of Meals Served
Community Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify Community Stakeholders (community-based organizations, churches, service providers, etc.) that have trusted relationships with impacted population

While it is not possible to create a one-size-fits all approach to an equitable emergency response, below are general guidance questions for relevant partners to consider in their response plan. It is essential that the City communicates with community stakeholders who understand the cultural sensitivities of the impacted residents, which increases the likelihood of an equitable response.

Equity Question	Coordinating Partner
Are residents in need of emergency housing?	Emergency Management Department, Community Investment for Families Department, Housing Department, LAHSA, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)
Are residents in need of emergency transportation services?	Department of Transportation, LA Metro, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)

What languages are spoken in this community?	Identify Translation Services, Community Investment for Families Department, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)
Are there residents with disabilities in need of special assistance?	Emergency Management Department, Department on Disability, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)
Are there aging residents in need of special assistance?	Department of Aging, Community Stakeholder, Elected Office(s)
Are residents in need of food and water?	Emergency Management Department, Community Investment for Families Department, Housing Department, LAHSA, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)
Are residents in need of immediate financial services?	Emergency Management Department, Economic Workforce Development Department, Community Investment for Families Department
Are local businesses impacted by the emergency? Conduct a needs assessment.	Emergency Management Department, Economic Workforce Development Department, Community Stakeholders, Elected Office(s)

Sincerely,



Capri Maddox, Esq.
Executive Director / General Manager

CM:DP:RH