



**SoCal Catastrophic Earthquake
Capstone Functional Exercise
FEMA NRCC, DC
May 11-14, 2015
Exercise After Action Report (AAR)**



Exercise Summary

The Southern California Catastrophic Earthquake Capstone Functional Exercise (SoCal 2015) was a joint exercise between FEMA Region IX and the FEMA Headquarters National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). The objective for SoCal 2015 was the implementation and evaluation of FEMA RIX and California Office of Emergency Services (OES) Catastrophic Earthquake Plan. The scenario was a 7.8 magnitude catastrophic earthquake in the Southern CA area impacting the lower eight (8) Counties in CA with over 10 million people affected (~1.5 million sheltered/~500,000 pets) and devastation to public infrastructure (e.g., roads, water/electrical/natural gas systems), private industry (e.g., dairy, poultry, and agriculture) and thousands injured and/or killed. In addition, ESF11 tested the implementation of the FEMA Catastrophic Level 1 Event Policy Memo transitioning operations from a FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) to the NRCC.

As part of this exercise and consistent with FEMA concepts, the National Coordinator, Coordinators from both FEMA Region 1 and 9, as well as ESF #11 and APHIS partners developed a transition plan to outline the roles and responsibilities of regional operations and the steps needed to successfully transition these to ESF #11 personnel at the national level. This included a meeting with APHIS, ESF #11, and FEMA partners to verify access to the NRCC, Web EOC access and authorities, Regional ESF #11 contacts lists, logistics and liaison support from the field (IOF/JFO).

ESF #11 was notionally activated to the RRCC, the IOF, and the NRCC. Collateral duty ESF #11 desk officers also were involved in parts of the exercise. APHIS Animal Care and ESF #11 partner NGO's supported the exercise by staffing an animal multi-agency coordination cell at the NRCC to test federal/NGO coordination needed for deployment of donated NGO resources to support the animal response.

Lessons Learned

Successful

- Good communication between the NRCC and RRCC which aided the FEMA RIX Coordinator greasing the skids to establish communication and coordination between state agriculture/emergency management and the NRCC ESF #11 staff. This resulted in a smooth transition when the RIX RRCC ESF #11 demobilized and FEMA RIX coordinator dropped out of the exercise for a real world event.
- Excellent coordination between FNS and APHIS on Infant Formula/Baby Food request, as well as filling out some of the Calculator Spreadsheet.
- FEMA RI ESF #11 Coordinator deployment to support NRCC operations provided continuity of the response operations from the field.
- Utilizing the Regional ESF #11 Coordinator from the impacted region as a liaison to support the NRCC with situational awareness created a real-time information flow and reduced delays.

- Animal Care involvement of the animal NGOs (NARSC) at the NRCC and with field personnel.
- Capability of the animal “whole community” to meet disaster response needs.
- Coordination between ESF #6 and ESF #11 was good.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

- Update ESF #11 Operational Checklist for the NRCC and headquarters staff would benefit APHIS and ESF #11 partners supporting the NRCC.
- Need to prepare written ConOps for Level 1 activations. Ensure WebEOC permissions are appropriate and in place before an incident. Create a checklist for WebEOC.
- Incident information: The NGOs did not have access to sufficient incident information. DOI’s ESF #11 Coordinator did not receive situation reports.
- Problems with systems access, connectivity, and building access at the NRCC hampered effectiveness. WebEOC went down at the RRCC and the State of California, also causing challenges. Need to develop work-around for when WebEOC is down.
- The real world emergency occurring during the exercise pulled key personnel from the exercise; as a result, the paperwork to transport and stage the donated resources was initiated, but never fully executed.
- Better coordination mechanisms are needed among NGOs and between NGOs and government to effectively coordinate distribution of donated supplies.