

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: February 27, 2008 REPORT NO: 08-028

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of March 5, 2008

SUBJECT: Informational report from the San Diego Police Department regarding
Managing Critical Incidents and Disasters

SUMMARY:

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND:

Preparing for natural and man-made disasters is a key responsibility of all first responders. Recently, the City of San Diego was challenged with two natural disasters that tested the Police and Fire Department's ability to respond quickly and effectively to a major landslide and firestorm. Though there were many partners in the successful efforts to minimize loss of life and property damage, this report will focus on the actions and preparations of the San Diego Police Department and its Critical Incident Management Unit for future events.

The Critical Incident Management Unit /Homeland Security (CIMU/HS) is staffed by a Sergeant and three officers whose mission is to assist Commanding Officers with preparing for, managing, and recovering from critical incidents and natural disasters. CIMU/HS provides the following services:

- Incident Command System (ICS) assistance.
- Specialized vehicle and equipment support.
- Remote Command Post and Department Operations Center setup and operations
- Coordinates Mutual Aid requests and resources from County, State and Federal agencies.
- Oversees Police Department training and compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) program.
- Provides training in responding to Chemical, Bacteriological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CRBNE) incidents.
- CIMU maintains on-call personnel ready to respond to any critical incident 24-hours a day, everyday.

- Prepares and manages Grants related to Homeland Security and CRBNE response that pay for equipment, vehicles and training.

DISCUSSION

CIMU/HS is currently involved in preparations for coordinating and participating in two large-scale exercises this year involving a massive earthquake and a widespread biological attack. These exercises are designed to improve inter-agency communications, operational procedures, tactics, and to test equipment and response plans.

I. NATURAL DISASTERS

The primary mission of the San Diego Police Department during natural disasters is similar to its everyday mission of providing for the safety and security of the citizen's of San Diego. In some disasters, such as widespread fires, landslides, earthquakes and floods the Police Department would typically assist the Fire Department with traffic control, area security, rescues and evacuations. Police personnel also set up and staff shelters in coordination with the Red Cross.

California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) mandate a 40 hour refresher training session for all Law Enforcement Officers every two years. The current training cycle includes: Emergency Vehicle Operations, Firearms Proficiency, Defensive Tactics, 1st aide and CPR, Tactical Communications, Handling People in Crisis and Responding to Active Shooter Incidents. This update training is relevant and timely because these life-saving and law enforcement skills are the ones typically used by police responding to natural and man-made disasters.

II. TERRORISM

The first step in reducing the possibility of a terrorist attack is through prevention. The Department has launched a Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) Program, which provides select officers with specific anti-terrorism training and serves as an information conduit between Federal information assets and local agencies. This program is instrumental in passing on timely information related to terrorist activity to patrol officers in the field.

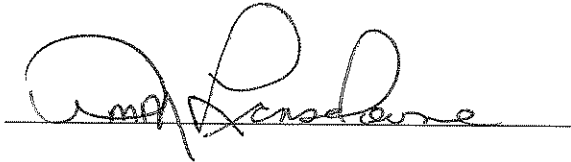
In the near future, CIMU/HS will be conducting Terrorism Response Training for all Patrol Divisions of the Police Department. This training's focus will be to raise awareness of terrorist pre-incident indicators and teach specific tactics when responding to CRBNE type events.

CONCLUSION

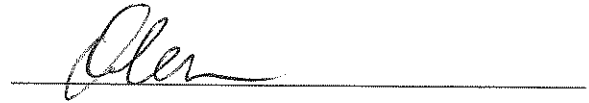
Our success in mitigating the effects of large-scale natural disasters is due in part to the effective working relationship between the Police Department and the County Sheriff's Office. Well-established Mutual Aide channels allow for the rapid response of additional resources and minimize potential delays and miscommunications.

Through successful experience, large-scale operational exercises, and ongoing training the San Diego Police Department continues its commitment to prepare for a timely and effective response to critical incidents and disasters.

The San Diego Police Department looks forward to serving the community in the new year to come and will continue to meet any challenges with the same dedication, resilience and commitment to excellence that has made us “America’s Finest” Police Department.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Lansdowne", written over a horizontal line.

William M. Lansdowne
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Olen", written over a horizontal line.

Jill Olen
Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Public Safety/Homeland Security