



Ventura County Operational Area

Emergency Operations Plan



Version 1.0
February 2026 - DRAFT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLESiii

INTRODUCTION 1

PLAN APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION.....3

PLAN ORGANIZATION7

 Base Plan 7

 Functional and Hazard-Specific Annexes.....7

 Supporting Documents..... 8

PLAN DEVELOPMENT8

PLAN MAINTENANCE.....9

PLAN AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY 10

***DISCLOSURE EXEMPTIONS* 10**

RECORD OF PLAN REVISIONS 11

1 PLAN OVERVIEW 15

***1.1 PLAN PURPOSE* 15**

***1.2 PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS* 16**

***1.3 SCOPE* 17**

 1.3.1 Activation of the EOP 17

2 SITUATION OVERVIEW 19

***2.1 GEOGRAPHY AND HAZARDS* 19**

***2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS* 22**

 2.2.1 Ethnicity and Culture 23

 2.2.2 Language 24

 2.2.3 Access and Functional Needs 28

3 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS30

***3.1 ADA / AFN CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS*..... 33**

4 PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION38

5 ANIMAL CARE CONSIDERATIONS38

6 TRAINING AND EXERCISES.....39

7 ALERT AND WARNING41

8 ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES.....41

***8.1 STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM*.....41**

 8.1.1 SEMS Requirements for Local Governments..... 45

 8.1.2 County Responsibilities Under SEMS 45

 8.1.3 EOC Organization Under SEMS 46

 8.1.4 Major SEMS Components..... 47

 8.1.5 SEMS Coordination 49

***8.2 NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM*..... 51**

 8.2.1 Resource Management 52

 8.2.2 Command and Coordination 53

 8.2.3 Communications and Information Management 53

***8.3 VENTURA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION*..... 54**

8.3.1 County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)..... 55

8.3.2 County EOC Activation..... 61

8.3.2.1 Potential Activation of the County EOC 63

8.3.2.2 Who Can Activate the EOC..... 63

8.3.2.3 How to Request EOC Activation 64

8.3.2.4 Deactivation of the EOC 64

8.3.3 EOC Location and Capabilities 64

8.3.4 Alternate EOC Locations 65

9 CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT 66

9.1 LINES OF SUCCESSION..... 66

9.2 ALTERNATE COUNTY SEATS 70

9.3 PRESERVATION OF VITAL RECORDS 70

10 MUTUAL AID 72

10.1 INTRODUCTION 72

10.2 MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS 72

10.3 MUTUAL AID COORDINATORS 76

10.4 PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY MUTUAL AID 77

10.5 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 78

11 AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES..... 80

11.1 GENERAL..... 80

The California Emergency Services Act 80

The California State Emergency Plan 80

The National Incident Management System 80

The National Response Framework (NRF) 80

The Standardized Emergency Management System 80

11.2 EMERGENCY AUTHORITIES 80

11.3 REFERENCES..... 84

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Department/Agency Concurrence | 4 |
| Record of Plan Revisions | 12 |
| EOP Distribution List | 13 |
| Table 2-1. Ventura County Hazards | 21 |
| Table 2-2. Language of Origin of LEP Individuals..... | 25 |
| Table 2-3. Origin Languages of English Learner Students | 27 |
| Table 3-1. Response Operations Priorities | 31 |
| Table 8-1. Essential SEMS Functions | 47 |
| Table 8-2. Emergency Operations Center Organization Matrix | 59 |
| Table 8-3. EOC Activation Levels | 62 |
| Table 9-1. Lines of Succession for County Department Heads | 68 |
| | |
| Figure 2-1. Ventura County Area Map..... | 19 |
| Figure 2-2. Hazard Risk Ratings | 22 |
| Figure 2-3. Population by Ethnicity in Ventura County | 23 |
| Figure 2-4. Primary Language Spoken at Home | 24 |
| Figure 2-5. Areas of Linguistic Isolation in Ventura County | 26 |
| Figure 6-1. HSEEP Training Cycle..... | 40 |
| Figure 8-1. Ventura County Operational Area Organization Chart..... | 57 |
| Figure 10-1. Mutual Aid System Flow Chart..... | 73 |
| Figure 10-2. California Mutual Aid Region Map | 75 |
| Figure 10-3. Discipline-Specific Mutual Aid Systems | 77 |

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INTRODUCTION

Ventura County recognizes that disasters can strike at any time, and strives to enact safeguards that protect the lives, property, and environment of our community. This is best accomplished through thoughtful planning, and implementation of preparedness measures and regular training.

The Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is a preparedness document, designed to be read, understood and exercised prior to an emergency. The EOP provides a scalable and flexible platform for the County's planning and response for large-scale, extraordinary emergency events. The EOP can also be used to manage large or pre-planned events that require multi-agency or multi-jurisdictional coordination (e.g., parades, processions, sporting events). It is not intended to address normal day-to-day emergencies or the well-established and routine procedures used in responding to such emergencies.

The EOP focuses on the operational concepts related to all-hazards emergency response and recovery, including maintaining the County's continued compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) requirements as presented in Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations, and other applicable laws and regulations.

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PLAN APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION

This EOP has been reviewed by the below listed County departments/agencies. Personnel with a role in executive leadership, coordination and management, and operational implementation of incident procedures agree with the content and their role as outlined in this EOP.

Upon completion of review and concurrence by these departments/agencies, the EOP was submitted to the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) for review. Following incorporation of their feedback, it was presented to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for official adoption and promulgation in accordance with County Code.

Department/Agency Concurrence

| DEPARTMENT/AGENCY | TITLE | CONTACT NAME |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Agricultural Commissioner | Commissioner | Korinne Bell |
| Airports | Director | Keith Freitas |
| Animal Services | Director | Esteban Rodriguez |
| County Executive Office | CEO | Sevet Johnson |
| Fire Department | Chief | Dustin Gardner |
| General Services Agency | Director | Thomas Hunt |
| Harbor Department | Director | Michael Tripp |
| Health Care Agency | Director | Theresa Cho |
| Human Services Agency | Director | Roger Robinson |
| Information Technology | CIO | Terrence Theobald |
| Medical Examiner | COO | Renee Higgins |
| Public Works Agency | Director | Greg Strakalause |
| Resource Management Agency | Director | Robert Mullane |
| Sheriff's Office | Sheriff | Jim Fryhoff |

Letter of Promulgation

TO: OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES, AND CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY of VENTURA

The preservation of life, property, and the environment are inherent responsibilities of local, state, and federal governments. The County of Ventura has prepared this Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to ensure the most effective and economical allocation of resources for the maximum benefit and protection of the public in times of emergency.

While no plan can fully prevent the negative impacts of a disaster, well-developed plans carried out by knowledgeable and well-trained personnel can minimize losses. This plan establishes the emergency organization, assigns tasks, specifies policies and general procedures, and provides for coordination of planning efforts of the various emergency staff and service elements utilizing the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The objective of this plan is to incorporate and coordinate all the facilities and personnel of the County into an efficient organization capable of responding to any emergency.

This EOP is an extension of the California State Emergency Plan. It will be reviewed and exercised periodically and revised as necessary to meet changing conditions.

The Board of Supervisors gives its full support to this plan and urges all officials, employees, and citizens, individually and collectively, to do their share in the whole community emergency effort in Ventura County.

This EOP will become effective on approval by the County Board of Supervisors.

Approval Date: _____

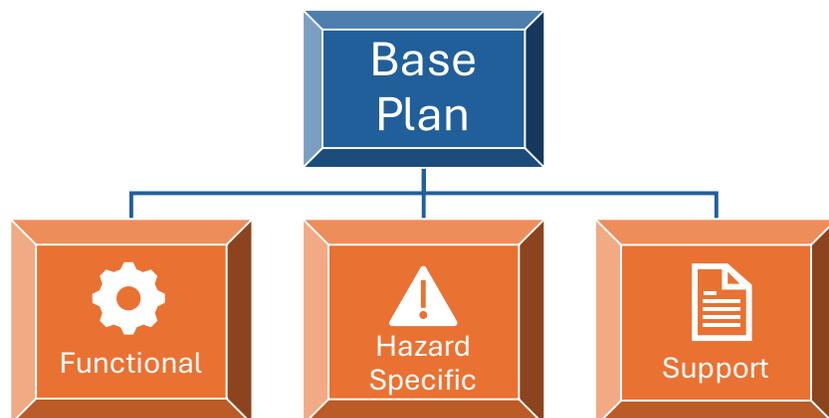
Board Resolution

A copy of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors' Resolution approving the plan will be inserted here.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This EOP has been organized into four parts:

EOP Organization



Base Plan

The Base Plan provides overarching information on emergency operations within the Ventura County OA, identifies potential hazards, incident response policies, describes the response organization, and assigns tasks.

Functional and Hazard-Specific Annexes

EOP Annexes add specific information, procedures, and responsibilities to the general framework of the EOP's base plan that can be applied to different operational functions or specific hazards. To maintain currency, these annexes are updated independently of the Base Plan.

Functional Annexes. These planning documents support and augment the Base Plan by focusing on specific operational functions (e.g. Evacuations, Mass Care and Shelter) critical to a successful response. They describe the policies, processes, roles, and

responsibilities that agencies and departments carry out before, during, and after an incident or event that can be applied to a broad spectrum of hazards.

Hazard-Specific Annexes. These documents are operational documents that augment the Base Plan, focusing on preventative, protective, response, and recovery actions taken regarding specific hazards (e.g., Extreme Heat/Cold, Oil Spills, Earthquakes). This includes identifying which operational functions should be activated, recognizing incident-specific resources, and recognizing incident-specific considerations.

Supporting Documents

This Section of the EOP contains supporting information on emergency operations within the Ventura County OA including:

EOC Position Checklists. Description of the emergency response organization and emergency action checklists and reference materials for each of the EOC Sections: management, operations, logistics, planning and finance.

Other Supporting Documentation. Additional supporting documentation and guidance materials specific to each of the EOC Sections.

Emergency Notification and Contact Lists. Contains restricted-use documents including disaster/emergency notification lists, and other essential, secure and/or sensitive information.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The EOP was developed with the cooperation of County departments and agencies that play a functional role in responding to emergencies. The plan is organized in accordance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) and the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) standards for local jurisdictions.

The County’s planning process for the EOP utilizes a ‘whole community’ approach that follows established best practices and legal requirements to promote collaboration among emergency planners, disability advocates, health professionals, and community leaders. The planning process incorporates utilization of an Access and Functional Needs (AFN) workgroup to ensure that the diverse needs of individuals who may require assistance during emergencies and disasters are considered and integrated into all facets of the County’s emergency preparedness strategy.

All departments, offices, and employees of Ventura County are expected to abide by and cooperate fully with the actions described in this plan. It applies to all agencies and individuals, public and private, having responsibilities in unincorporated areas of the County for emergency preparedness, prevention, response, recovery and mitigation.

PLAN MAINTENANCE

The EOP is a dynamic document that is regularly reviewed, updated. Updates to the plan may be needed as:

- Modifications to operating procedures occur or the concept of operations for them change.
- Changes occur in policy, procedure, law, or regulations.
- Revisions occur to state or federal planning standards.
- Changes to local government organizational structures.
- Threats evolve and at-risk areas and populations shift.
- Upgrades to communications systems occur.
- Corrective actions from trainings, exercises, or after-action reviews are implemented.

Changes in government structure, federal guidance, or local/state/federal policies and regulations may require alterations to the Base Plan. Lessons learned from actual emergencies and training exercises test the effectiveness of the various EOP annexes and other supporting documents, and will be incorporated into future revisions to ensure the plan remains current and effective. To maintain currency, these annexes are updated independently of the Base Plan.

Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services is responsible for maintaining this plan and submitting it to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for approval and promulgation.

Periodic review of this EOP is recommended to incorporate minor revisions as applicable. A more substantial update of the EOP is recommended to occur every five years, or when the documents are no longer current.

Each element of the emergency management organization is responsible for assuring the preparation and maintenance of appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) resources lists and checklists that detail how assigned responsibilities are performed to

support implementation of the EOP. SOPs should include specific emergency authorities that designated officials and their successors can assume during emergency situations.

PLAN AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The EOP is maintained on the County’s [Emergency Management Portal](#)¹. Applicable County agencies and emergency management partners may obtain access to the Portal as necessary and upon request from Sheriff’s Emergency Services.

Publicly available components of the EOP, including the Base Plan and applicable plan annexes and supporting documents, are made available to all County departments, agencies and applicable partner organizations and jurisdictions, as well as members of the public or media via the [ReadyVenturaCounty.org](#) website.

This EOP and subsequent updates will continue to incorporate best practices for accessibility² of these documents in the digital environment.

Disclosure Exemptions

Much of the EOP is available for public review. However, portions of this document contain sensitive information relevant to the emergency response operations of Ventura County. Portions that include information with significant implications on county, regional, state, or national security are placed in attachments that are exempt from public disclosure under the provisions of the California Public Records Act §7920 et seq.

¹ The County transitioned to an all-digital format for its emergency management planning documents in 2022.

² In accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

RECORD OF PLAN REVISIONS

This section documents approved additions or modifications to the EOP, including:

- Summary/reason for the modifications.
- Date of the change
- Name and title of the person making the change, and

When major or significant changes to the EOP need to be made, the revised EOP will be considered an update, and the cover page, promulgation page, and approval and implementation pages will be updated to reflect that it is a new version³ of the plan.

Sheriff's Emergency Services will ensure the most current version of the plan is uploaded to the County's [Emergency Management Portal](#) and the [ReadyVenturaCounty.org](#) website, and will notify all applicable departments, agencies, and individuals on the Plan Distribution list of its availability. The Plan Distribution list consists of all the agency leads for which plan concurrence was obtained, as well as key local and state representatives and the ten cities within the OA.

³ The title page of this EOP reflects that this is Version 1.0 of this plan. Subsequent minor revisions will be labeled as Version 1.X.

EOP Distribution List

| DEPARTMENT/AGENCY | |
|--|--|
| Agricultural Commissioner | Cal OES, Southern Region |
| Airports | Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff) |
| Animal Services | Board of Supervisors |
| Assessor's Office | American Red Cross, Ventura Chapter |
| Auditor-Controller | County Superintendent of Schools |
| County Executive Officer | City of Camarillo |
| County Clerk | City of Fillmore |
| County Counsel | City of Moorpark |
| District Attorney | City of Ojai |
| Fire Department | City of Oxnard |
| General Services Agency Director | City of Port Hueneme |
| Harbor Department | City of San Buenaventura (Ventura) |
| Health Care Agency Director | City of Santa Paula |
| Human Resources Director | City of Simi Valley |
| Human Services Agency Director | City of Thousand Oaks |
| Information Technology Services CIO | EOC staff |
| Library (catalogued as reference volume) | |
| Medical Examiner | |
| Probation Agency | |
| Public Works Agency | |
| Resource Management Agency | |
| Sheriff's Office | |

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1 PLAN OVERVIEW

1.1 PLAN PURPOSE

In accordance with California’s Emergency Management System (SEMS), this EOP is a preparedness document that serves as the legal and conceptual framework for incident management of extraordinary or large-scale emergency situations that may impact the Ventura County OA.

The EOP outlines the specific actions that County agencies and applicable jurisdictions will carry out when an emergency event exceeds or has the potential to exceed the capacity of a single agency or jurisdiction to respond. It sets forth the organizational framework and steps needed to achieve the County’s emergency management goals:

- Provide effective life safety measures, reduce property loss, and protect the environment.
- Provide for the rapid resumption of impacted businesses and community services.
- Provide accurate documentation and records required for cost recovery efforts.

This EOP:

- Identifies potential threats (e.g. natural hazards, technological hazards, human-caused hazards).
- Establishes the emergency management organization required to respond to and recover from significant emergencies or disasters impacting the County.
 - ✓ Sets forth lines of authority and organizational relationships.
 - ✓ Assigns responsibility to organizations and individuals for carrying out specific actions.
- Establishes the concepts associated with the management of incidents, including the organization and activation of the County/OA Emergency Operations Center.
- Describes how people, property, and the environment are protected.
- Identifies personnel, equipment, facilities, supplies, and other resources to support the response that are available within the jurisdiction or by agreement with other jurisdictions.
- Reconciles requirements with other jurisdictions.

Where practicable, this document also reflects an understanding that the insights of community members should strive to be included throughout the County's emergency planning process, particularly those who are most at-risk and/or vulnerable during disasters. It identifies opportunities to ensure that all community members' needs are understood and met throughout all phases of the emergency management cycle: preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

The cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Ventura, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks are each responsible for maintaining their own EOPs, consistent with policies and procedures established by this plan. However, this plan provides the structure for coordination and support of the cities (in compliance with SEMS) when an incident spans multiple jurisdictions, when needs exceed the resources available within one or more jurisdictions, or when an incident is otherwise complex and assistance is requested.

1.2 PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- The County will commit available resources to save lives, minimize injury to individuals, minimize damage to property, and protect the environment.
- The Sheriff, as the County's Director of Emergency Services will coordinate the County's disaster response in conformance with the County's Emergency Services Ordinance.
- Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services is the lead coordinating agency for the Ventura County Operational Area, which includes the County and its political subdivisions (i.e. cities and special districts).
- The County of Ventura uses the Incident Command System (ICS), SEMS and NIMS in emergency response operations. The resources of the County of Ventura will be made available to cities, local agencies, and citizens to cope with disasters affecting this area.
- The County will commit its resources to a reasonable degree before requesting mutual aid assistance.
- Mutual aid assistance will be requested when disaster relief requirements exceed the combined capacities of the cities' and County's ability to meet them.

1.3 SCOPE

This Plan is a statement of Ventura County policy regarding emergency management. It assigns tasks and responsibilities to County departments and other agencies and organizations specifying their roles before, during, and after an emergency or disaster situation. EOPs do not apply to normal day-to-day emergency incidents, or the well-established procedures used to respond to and manage such emergencies. Therefore, day-to-day procedures and specific emergency responses of the County and OA partners are not addressed in this plan.

This plan was developed pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act and conforms to SEMS. The OA for Ventura County includes the 10 cities, special districts, and the unincorporated areas of the County.

In accordance with SEMS and a County Joint Powers Agreement, when a disaster occurs, the Ventura County OA coordinates and supports emergency operations within the County jurisdiction. The EOP provides guidance when the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activates, although its provisions for preparedness, mitigation and training indicate that this Plan remains in effect even when the EOC is not activated.

1.3.1 Activation of the EOP

The County's EOP activates when an incident or event in the County has overwhelmed or exceeded the capabilities of a single department or city and requires additional or non-standard resources. Activation of the EOP does not, by itself, require activation of the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or proclamation of a local emergency. The following list of events automatically trigger activation of the EOP:

- On the order of the Sheriff or their designee pursuant to County Ordinance No. 4410 as adopted on 2/9/2010, provided that the existence or threatened existence of a Local Emergency has been determined.
- When the Governor of California has proclaimed a State of Emergency that includes the County of Ventura or cities within its boundaries.
- On the proclamation of a State of War Emergency as defined in California Emergency Services Act (Chapter 7, Division 1, Title 2, California Government Code).

- When there has been a Presidential declaration of a National Emergency that includes the County of Ventura or cities within its boundaries.
- On receipt of an attack warning or the observation of a nuclear detonation.

At the onset of a major event, the Sheriff's Emergency Services Duty Officer may notify the Director of Sheriff's Emergency Services. The Director of Emergency Services or designee will then contact the County Executive Officer (CEO). If OES leadership is not available, the Duty Officer will contact the County Executive Officer (CEO) directly. Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services staff may also implement the EOP as deemed appropriate for the situation or at the request of an on-scene Incident Commander. As noted above, issuance of a local emergency proclamation is not required to implement the EOP.

2 SITUATION OVERVIEW

2.1 GEOGRAPHY AND HAZARDS

This section provides a brief overview of the County’s geography and a summary of threats based on their historical occurrence and information in the [Ventura County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan](#), as well as the Hazards and Safety Element and associated background report (which includes a more thorough discussion of hazard details) for the [Ventura County General Plan](#)

The County of Ventura covers 1,845 square miles (on the mainland), and is bordered on west by Santa Barbara County, and to the north by portions of Santa Barbara and Kern counties (**Figure 2-1**). It shares its entire eastern border and part of its southern border with Los Angeles County.

Figure 2-1. Ventura County Area Map



The County's topography is complex, ranging in nature from flat, gently sloping sand beaches and fertile plains to rocky promontories, and steep canyons and hillsides. With rugged hills and mountains inland, and limited coastal access, Ventura remained largely isolated from surrounding areas until the 1900s. This resulted in a slower rate of growth compared to neighboring jurisdictions like Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. However, during the 1900s, improved transportation connections (e.g. railways, and Highways 1, 101, and 126) and new economic opportunities (e.g. development of area oil fields and ports/harbors, the local naval base, and biotech industry) supported substantial growth and diversification of the County's population.

The northern half of the County, comprising approximately 53 percent of its total area, is located within the Los Padres National Forest. Of the remaining 47 percent (555,953 acres), 59 percent is agricultural, and 17.5 percent is urban. Approximately 88 percent of the County's more than 835,000 people live in the southern half of the County, within the boundaries of 10 incorporated cities. The combined area of these jurisdictions comprises approximately 178 square miles, or less than 10% of the County's total area. The proximity of large areas of the County's undeveloped and national forest lands to highly developed urban areas presents unique challenges in responding to emergency incidents.

The County's jurisdiction also includes 42 miles of coastline along the Santa Barbara Channel. Approximately 26 miles of this coastline are reliant on protection from the ocean's forces by rock rip-rap or seawalls of various shapes and sizes, including portions of major transportation routes (e.g. Highway 1 and 101)⁴. The County's jurisdiction also extends offshore to include Anacapa Island, which is part of the Channel Islands National Park.

More than 30 streams as well as two major rivers traverse the County on their way to the Pacific Ocean. Most area streams do not flow year-round, but can channel substantial amounts of water and soil during heavy storm activity. Storm activity also increases the possibility of transportation - related incidents on road and/or rail lines, which for many miles run within one hundred yards of the coast, and over many streams, rivers and culverts that lead to marine waters.

The County also has a significant number of protected wetlands and alluvial plains formed by the major rivers and streams of the area. Several areas of the County are home to 29

⁴ California Coastal Commission.2005. California Shoreline Armoring Dataset

protected species, such as the California Condor, California least tern, Southern California steelhead, and Ventura marsh milk-vetch⁵.

The County is exposed to numerous natural, human-caused, and technological hazards (**Table 2-1**). The risks each of these events pose range in potential severity from minor to catastrophic, and their frequency of occurrence likewise ranges from events that occur only very rarely (e.g. dam failures, tsunamis, tornadoes), to those that may occur multiple times a year (e.g. wildfires, flooding, extreme heat). Additionally, the risks posed by many of these hazards are expected to be exacerbated by the effects of continued climate change.

Table 2-1. Ventura County Hazards

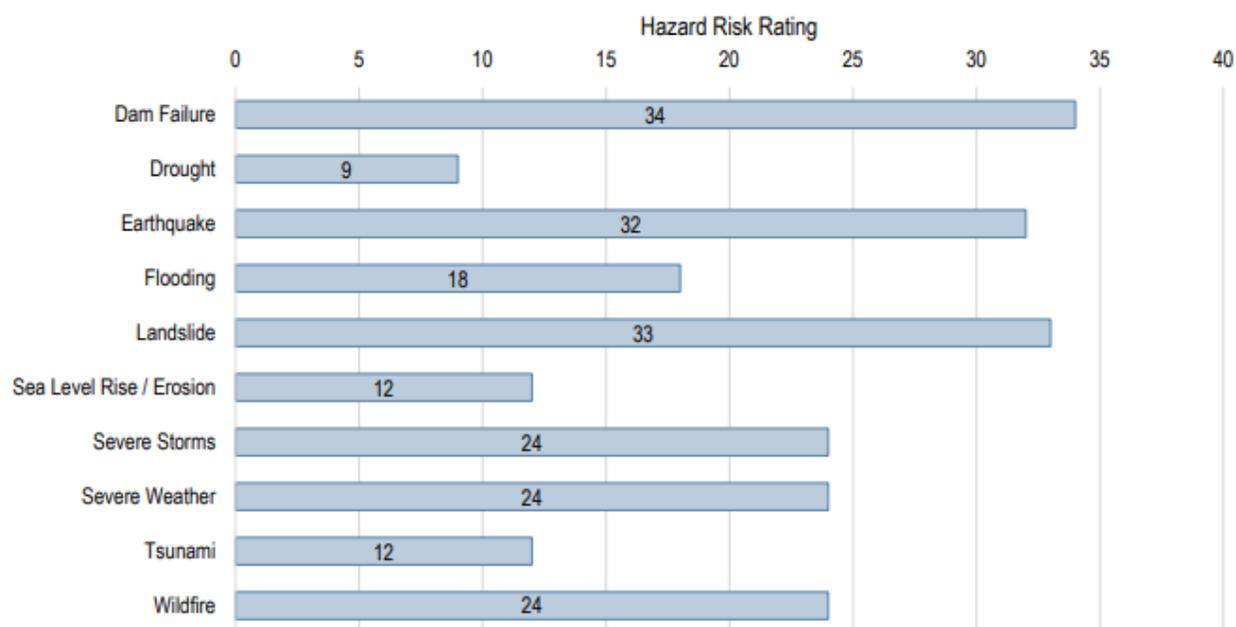
| Ventura County Hazards | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Agricultural/Biological | Geological Events - Mudslide / Debris Flow / Landslide |
| Civil Unrest | Hazardous Materials Incidents (chemical, radiological, nuclear, oil spills) |
| Cyber Attacks | Pandemic/Epidemics (e.g., influenza, Covid) |
| Dam Failure | Terrorism |
| Drought | Tornadoes |
| Earthquakes | Transportation Incidents |
| Extreme Heat/Cold Events | Tsunami |
| Flooding (urban, riverine, coastal) | Wildfire |

Specific details on the potential severity and frequency of most hazards can be found in the Ventura County Hazard Mitigation Plan and associated Storymap maintained on the

⁵ Ventura County Resource Management Agency. 2024. Summary of Biological Resource Regulations. <https://rma.venturacounty.gov/> .

County’s [ReadyVenturaCounty.org](https://www.readyventura.org) website, as well as in the Safety Element of the County’s General Plan. As shown in **Figure 2-2**, the analysis conducted as part of the 2022 HMP determined that hazards with the highest risk ratings for the County were landslides and dam failures. Hazards with medium risk ratings included earthquakes, wildfires, severe storms, severe weather (extreme heat/cold), and flooding. Hazards with lower risk ratings were sea level rise/coastal erosion, tsunamis, and drought.

Figure 2-2. Hazard Risk Ratings



2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Ventura County’s temperate climate, proximity to the coast, abundance of natural resources, and evolving economic opportunities make it a highly desirable place to live, work, and visit, thus drawing people from all over the world. Understanding the community’s makeup and how it may change over time is important to making sound emergency planning decisions.

Wealth, education level, cultural norms (race, ethnicity, and religion), language, gender, age, and whether they live with disabilities or have other access and functional needs all influence the degree to which individuals and communities may be impacted by a hazard event and their resilience to it.

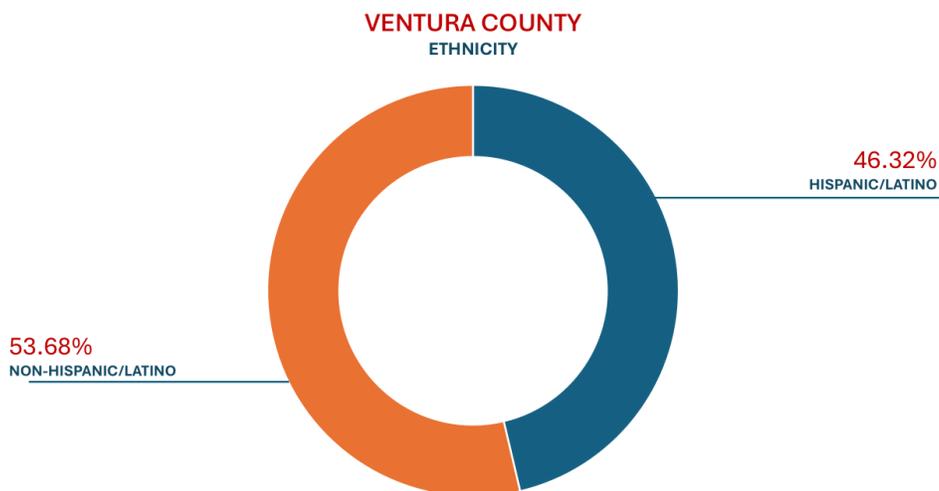
Spatial analyses of data can bring focus to areas where enhanced public outreach,

education, or response and recovery resources may be necessary due to higher concentrations of people experiencing different or conflating vulnerabilities.

2.2.1 Ethnicity and Culture

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), there are approximately 820,712 people residing in the County. Nearly half of the population (46%) of the County identify as being ethnically Hispanic/Latino (**Figure 2-3**)⁶. Of these individuals, approximately 85% trace their ethnic origins to neighboring Mexico.

Figure 2-3. Population by Ethnicity in Ventura County



The County, in line with the rest of the state, is also a popular destination for immigrants. According to the 2024 ACS estimates, nearly 1 in 4 Ventura County residents (23.4%) was born in a foreign country⁷. This number includes naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants (e.g. foreign students and farmworkers), humanitarian migrants, and other foreign-born residents.

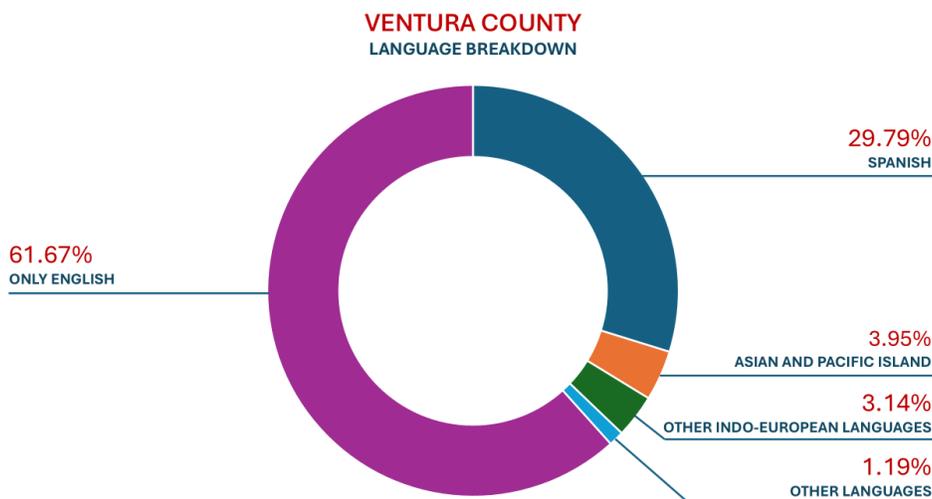
⁶ Ventura County Public Health (2025). U.S. Census Bureau Demographics data. Health Matters in Ventura County. Retrieved Sept 2025. Retrieved from : <https://www.healthmattersinvc.org/demographicdata?id=293§ionId=941>

The most common birthplace for foreign-born residents of the Ventura County OA is currently Mexico (90%), followed by the Philippines and China.

2.2.2 Language

The most recent ACS data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that while most Ventura County residents only speak English at home, for nearly 30% of residents Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home (Figure 2-4). Other commonly spoken languages in Ventura County include Tagalog, Chinese (Mandarin), Gujarati, and Vietnamese⁸.

Figure 2-4. Primary Language Spoken at Home



For homes where English is not the primary language spoken, it is important to note that this does not mean that emergency information will not be understood in these households. Many individuals and households are bilingual or multi-lingual. It does, however, indicate that there may be a higher likelihood that some individuals within the home have limited English proficiency (LEP) and do not understand English well. LEP describes individuals over 5 years of age who may, by reason of place of birth or culture:

⁸ Ventura County Public Health (2025). U.S. Census Bureau Demographics data. Health Matters in Ventura County. Retrieved Sept 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthmattersinvc.org/demographicdata?id=293§ionId=941>

- Have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
- Do not speak English as their primary language.
- Prefer to communicate in a language other than English.

Having LEP can affect an individual's ability to navigate access to healthcare, government services, education, and other important resources, especially during an emergency.

Pursuant to the provisions of Assembly Bill 1638 (2023), local agencies are required to determine languages that are spoken jointly by 5% or more of the population that speaks English less than “very well” according to the ACS data, and ensure that emergency information is provided in those languages.

The 2018-2022 ACS 5-year estimates, the most recent data available for county-level data, show that approximately 14.5% of the population age five and older in Ventura County speak a language other than English at home and speak English less than very well (**Table 2-2**)⁹.

Table 2-2. Language of Origin of LEP Individuals

| Native Language | Total LEP Population | Percent of Total Population |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Spanish | 94,090 | 11.8% |
| Asian and Pacific Islander Languages (e.g. Tagalog, Mandarin, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean) | 13,085 | 1.6% |
| Indo-European Languages (e.g. Gujarati, Hindi) | 4,853 | 0.6% |
| Other Languages | 3,727 | 0.5% |
| Any Language | 115,755 | 14.5% |

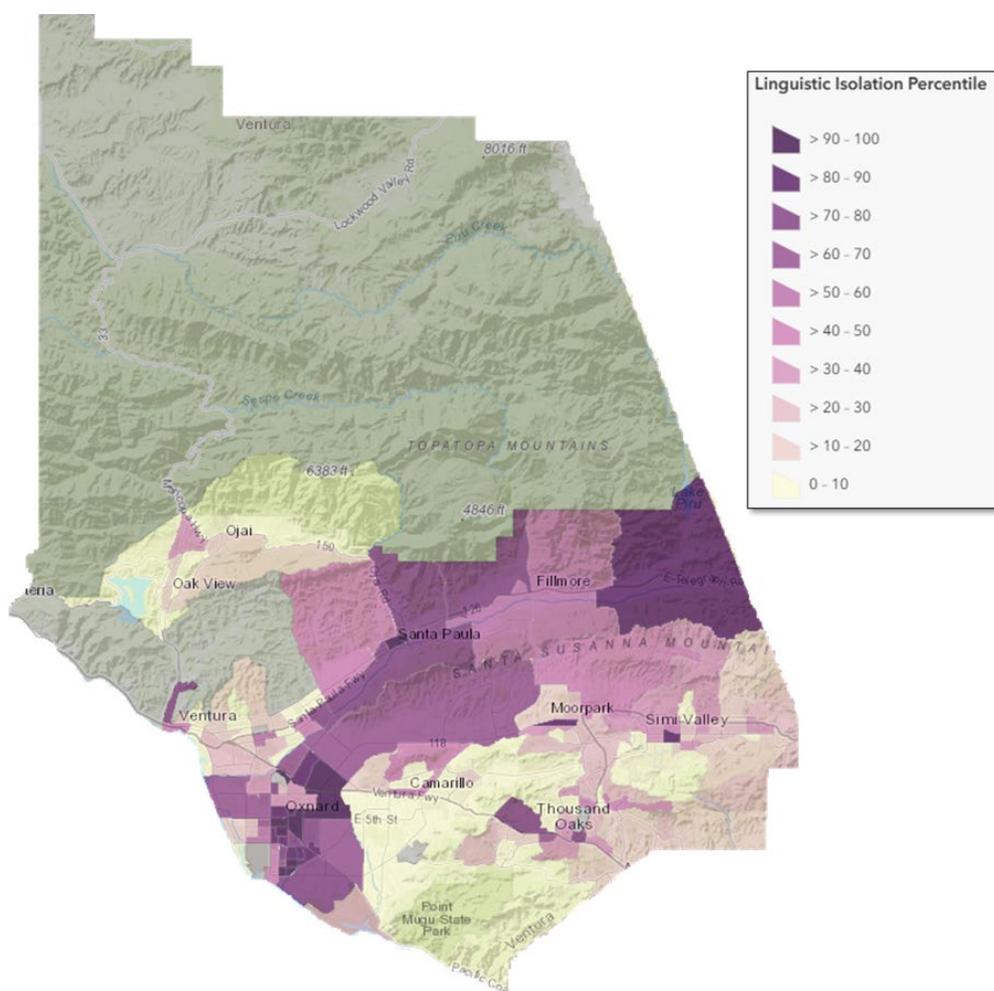
⁹ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year data. Accessed from <https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/Census2022/ventudp2022.pdf>

Spanish speakers make up 81.3% of the people in the county who speak English less than very well, comprising 11.8% of the County population overall. No other language is spoken jointly by 5% or more of the population that speaks English less than very well.

Linguistic Isolation

The US Census Bureau's ACS data from the years 2015-2019 highlights census tracts having higher percentages of limited English-speaking households where all members 14 years of age or older have at least some difficulty speaking English compared to the state average (Figure 2-5).

Figure 2-5. Areas of Linguistic Isolation in Ventura County



Source: CalEnviroScreen, Linguistic Isolation by percentile (2015-2019)

The areas of highest linguistic isolation occur along the County’s agricultural belt, extending from the Oxnard coastal plain up through the Santa Clara River Valley. Within some census tracts (e.g. the dark purple areas of Piru, Santa Paula, and Oxnard) the total percentage of households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English well is more than 20%, and ranges as high as nearly 50%.

English Language Learner Students

A review of information from the California Department of Education’s¹⁰ 2023-2024 Ventura County Education Report Card allows further insight into what extent alternate language needs may be present in the County. The report shows that 20.8% of the students enrolled in Ventura County are considered English Language Learners (ELL). Spanish is the primary language for over 90% of these students (Table 2-3). Additional languages spoken by these students are Otomian languages (e.g. Mixteco) which represent slightly less than 4% of the English Learners, followed by Arabic, Vietnamese, and Mandarin (Putonghua and Guoyu) which comprise less than 1% each of the English learning student population in the County.

Table 2-3. Origin Languages of English Learner Students

| Native Language | Total Number of Students | Percent |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Spanish | 23,431 | >90% |
| Mixteco (Otomian) | 1,012 | 4% |
| Arabic | 132 | <1% |
| Vietnamese | 124 | <1% |
| Mandarin | 120 | <1% |

Otomian languages such as Mixteco are prevalent among migrant farmworker communities in Ventura County. Though only making up a small portion (<3%) of the total County

¹⁰ California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office. 2023-2024 Language Group data. Accessed on 6/11/2025.

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/lc/CountyLC.aspx?Level=County&TheCounty=56+Ventura&cYear=2023-24>

population, these communities play an important role in the County’s economy. The high levels of linguistic isolation and unique cultural norms of these groups can necessitate specialized communication and outreach efforts since their origin languages are typically oral rather than written.

2.2.3 Access and Functional Needs

FEMA’s Office of Disability Integration and Coordination defines the term “Access and Functional Needs” (AFN) as pertaining to individuals who may have additional needs before, during and after an incident in functional areas including but not limited to communications, maintaining health, independence, support, safety and self-determination, and transportation.

Individuals needing additional assistance during an emergency may include those with physical, sensory, mental health, and cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities that affect their ability to function independently without assistance. As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

According to data from the ACS, approximately 12 percent¹¹ of the population of Ventura County reports living with a disability. In some areas of the County, however, the proportion of individuals living with a disability is close to 20 percent. Disabilities can include, but are not limited to, mobility, visual and hearing impairments; neurological conditions; chronic diseases; and mental health conditions. It is also important to note that many individuals living with disabilities may not present obvious manifestations of a disability.

Ensuring that emergency preparedness and response programs are made accessible to people with disabilities and those with other AFN, is a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Individuals living with disabilities are not alone, however, in potentially experiencing additional needs in functional areas resulting from a disaster event. California Government Code Section 8593.3 recognizes this when it defines the “Access and Functional Needs population” as consisting of individuals who have developmental or intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic conditions, injuries, limited English proficiency or

¹¹ Source: American Community Survey 5-Year (2019-2023). Last accessed: February 2025

<https://www.healthmattersincv.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=6057&localeId=293>

who are non-English speaking, older adults, children, people living in institutionalized settings, or those who are low income, homeless, or transportation disadvantaged, including, but not limited to, those who are dependent on public transit or those who are pregnant.

The population of individuals living with disabilities or other potential AFN, comprises a significant percentage of the overall County population. The 2019-2023 ACS data shows that:

- 11% identified as having a disability.
- 14.5% spoke English less than “very well”
- 20% were over 65 years of age
- 21% were under 18 years of age
- 6% of families live in poverty

The Ventura County Sheriff’s Emergency Services is in alignment with both FEMA and the California Government Code Section 8593.3 in ensuring that planning efforts account for the needs of the whole community.

Included in the County’s planning efforts for those with disabilities and other AFN are:

- Notification and warning procedures
- Evacuation considerations
- Emergency transportation
- Sheltering requirements
- Accessibility to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power
- Accessibility to mobility devices or service animals while in transit or at a shelter
- Accessibility of emergency information and translation services

3 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Emergency operations involve a full spectrum of activities that will vary depending upon the specifics of the incident. Some events may be preceded by a build-up period, providing enough time to warn the population and implement mitigation measures designed to reduce loss of life and property damage in advance of the event. Other events will occur with little or no advance warning, thus requiring immediate activation of the EOP and commitment of resources. All agencies must be prepared to respond promptly and effectively to any foreseeable emergency, including the provision and utilization of mutual aid.

Emergency management activities are frequently associated with the four emergency management phases outlined below.

Preparedness Phase

Preparedness involves activities taken in advance of an emergency that develop operational capabilities and effective responses to a disaster/emergency. These actions might include mitigation activities, disaster/emergency planning, training and exercises and public education. Those entities identified in this EOP as having either a primary or support mission relative to response and recovery activities should prepare Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Emergency Operating Procedures (EOPs) and checklists detailing personnel assignments, policies, notification rosters, and resource lists. Personnel should be acquainted with these SOPs/EOPs and checklists through periodic training in the activation and execution procedures.

Response Phase

Includes action to save lives, stabilize community lifelines, protect property and the environment and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred. Immediate response is accomplished within the affected area by local government agencies and segments of the private sector. Emphasis is placed on saving lives and property, obtaining control of the situation, and minimizing adverse effects of the disaster/emergency.

One of the following conditions will apply to the County during an event:

- The County is only minimally impacted by the incident or not impacted at all.
- The County may be requested to provide mutual aid to impacted jurisdictions.
- The County is impacted, but the incident can be managed using local resources.
- Evacuations of portions of the County are required due to uncontrollable immediate and ensuing threats.
- The County is impacted, and local resources may be exhausted. Mutual aid from outside the County is required.

The emergency management organization will give priority to the following operations during an emergency event:

Table 3-1. Response Operations Priorities

| Response Operations Priorities | |
|--|---|
| Dissemination of accurate and timely emergency information and warning to the public | Restoration of vital services and utilities |
| Situation analysis | Animal care operations |
| Resource allocation and control | Care and shelter operations |
| Evacuation and rescue operations | Access and perimeter control |
| Medical care operations | Public health operations |
| Medical Examiner operations | |

When local resources are committed to the maximum and additional resources are required, requests for mutual aid will be initiated through the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Emergency Management Mutual Aid (EMMA) system. Fire and law enforcement agencies will request or render mutual aid directly through established channels. Any action which involves financial outlay by the jurisdiction, or a request for military assistance, must be authorized by the Sheriff (or Sheriff’s designee). If required, the Cal OES may coordinate the establishment of one or

more Disaster Support Areas where resources and supplies can be received, stockpiled, allocated, and dispatched to support operations in the affected area(s).

Recovery Phase

As soon as possible, the Director of Cal OES, operating through the State Coordinating Officer (SCO), will bring together representatives of federal, state, county, and city agencies, as well as representatives of the American Red Cross, to coordinate the implementation of assistance programs and establishment of support priorities. Local Assistance Centers (LACs) or telephonic centers may also be established, providing a "one-stop" service to initiate the process of receiving federal, state and local recovery assistance.

The recovery period has major objectives that may overlap, including:

- Reinstatement of individual and family autonomy
- Provision of essential public services
- Permanent restoration of private and public property
- Identification of residual hazards
- Recovery of costs associated with response and recovery efforts
- Plans to mitigate future hazards

Mitigation Phase¹²

Mitigation seeks to break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. It includes activities that provide a critical foundation in the effort to reduce the loss of life and property from natural and/or man-made disasters by avoiding or lessening the impact of a disaster and providing value to the public by creating safer communities.¹³ Mitigation efforts occur both before and following disaster events. Post-disaster mitigation is part of the recovery process. Mitigation tools include:

¹² National Fire Protection Association's Standard 1600 recommends a fifth "Prevention Phase" to prevent damage and life impacts from disasters. Federal Emergency Management Agency and Cal OES recognize "prevention" as a component of the Mitigation Phase.

¹³ National Incident Management System, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, October 2017, pg.66

- Local ordinances and statutes (zoning, building codes and enforcement, etc.)
- Structural measures
- Tax levy or abatements
- Public information and community relations
- Land use planning
- Professional training

3.1 ADA / AFN CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

General Actions

The County works to address the needs of the ADA / AFN community throughout the emergency planning process. As part of the 2021 update to the EOP, a workgroup was created to help gather input from organizations throughout the County that have direct outreach to population groups living with disabilities and other AFN. The workgroup is comprised of both advocates for these communities and individuals with lived experience.

Inclusion of these organizations and individuals facilitates ensures that the needs and voices of individuals with disabilities and other AFN are incorporated and help inform the County's planning process and identify potential gaps in service. Utilization of the County's AFN workgroup continues to be used to evaluate, broaden, enhance strategies (e.g., communications, transportation, shelter considerations, and overall cultural competency) during this EOP update as well as inform the development/updates of the County's [All-Hazards Evacuation Plan](#), and [Alert and Warning Annex](#) and [Mass Care and Shelter Annex](#).

The following is a list of ongoing roles and responsibilities completed by Sheriff's Emergency Services staff, including the AFN Coordinator:

- Develop and maintain a general understanding of the many different AFN populations throughout the County and their general needs.
- Ensure methods used for alert and warning are accessible to persons with AFN, including hearing, speech and vision disabilities, as well as limited English and non-English speaking individuals.
- Maintain plans and contracts with public and private providers of accessible transportation to assist, as needed, with the evacuation of people with disabilities or other AFN, including identification of a mechanism to track medical support

equipment when life-safety requires separation of the equipment from the owner during an evacuation.

- Assist the PIO and EOC Alert and Warning Coordinator to develop preparedness and pre-scripted emergency messages and associated communication methods that are appropriate for all elements of the community, including individuals with disabilities and those with other AFN.
- In conjunction with the Care and Shelter Coordinator, review existing potential shelter sites regarding compliance with ADA requirements, (access, signage, etc.) and ensure cultural competence of staff.
- Identify shelters that have access to electricity, or emergency generators for individuals who may need support for battery-powered wheelchairs, respirators, light computers, or similar electronically powered assistance devices.
- Identify sources for support resources such as durable medical equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, canes), personal hygiene supplies, skilled staff (such as translators, and other individuals who can assist with activities of daily living, etc.).
- Ensure policies and procedures have been developed for the assessment of need and approval for replacement of medication and durable medical equipment (including equipment repair).
- Ensure language has been incorporated in policy and procedure revisions that allows for service animals in shelters.
- Evaluate and provide insights on pending and enacted legislation related to AFN concepts.

Often, the most effective response actions for an event take place long before an event occurs. For example, in compliance with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1638, the Ventura County OA evaluated U.S. Census data to establish applicable language provisions for public messaging during an event.

Response Actions

The AFN Coordinator is the lead for AFN in the Management Section in the County EOC and will be working in coordination with many of the County EOC representatives. The AFN Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that individuals with disabilities or other AFN are planned for and have the same services available to them as the rest of the community. Coordination will take place on a variety of levels including, but not limited to:

- **Health Care Agency** - Work to address the needs of individuals with disabilities and other AFN in all aspects of the emergency response.
- **Public Health** - Work to address the needs of those with disabilities and other AFN throughout emergency operations, especially those involving public health threats.
- **Public Information Officer** - Work to provide approved messaging that is accessible to all sectors within the population, including those with disabilities and other AFN (e.g. deaf and/or hard of hearing, sight impaired, and those who require messaging in a language other than English).
- **Mass Care and Shelter** - Work to accommodate those with disabilities and other AFN in the shelter locations, ensuring that medical and health services are available (e.g., access to medications, medical supplies, counseling, translation services).
- **Behavioral Health** - To identify and address the needs of those with specific mental health issues.
- **Animal Services** - Work to address the needs of service animals that are serving evacuees with disabilities and other AFN. Service animals are allowed in approved shelters and will be accommodated through coordination with the Care and Shelter Branch.
- **Logistics Section - Transportation** - Work to address the access and transportation needs of individuals with disabilities and other AFN, including the use of paratransit companies, vehicles, and equipment. The Transportation Coordinator and the AFN Coordinator will work closely together during evacuation operations.
- **Logistics Section - Supply/Acquisition** - Work to coordinate the procurement and purchasing of equipment and supplies for individuals with disabilities and other AFN. A large portion of these efforts will be focused around transportation and care and shelter operations.
- **Volunteer/Service Representatives** - Work with volunteer representatives and their respective organizations to address the needs of individuals with disabilities and other AFN.

Post-Response Actions

Post-response actions will include initial damage assessment, continuation of public services for individuals with disabilities or other AFN. Many of the services will need to be

provided in the response phase, as well as the recovery phase. Entities that were needed to provide services to meet the immediate disaster needs will implement their respective continuity plans to continue services following the initial response.

In planning for emergencies, all these individual differences make it important for every household and each individual to consider what they need in their plans and their supplies:

- Households with children should understand their children’s school’s plan. This includes where the children will stay safe, if adults in the household need to shelter in other locations until the immediate hazard is over.
- Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing should make sure that they can receive emergency alerts and warnings in an accessible form, including text messages.
- Individuals who require accessible transportation should work with their local paratransit and disability service providers to make an emergency plan.
- Individuals who speak languages other than English may need to identify sources of alerts and warnings and information about community plans in other languages.
- Individuals without vehicles should know local plans for public transportation and may need to plan for transportation from local government, organizations, or others.
- Households with infants should plan for food and supplies for infants and nursing mothers.
- Individuals with specific dietary needs should have adequate emergency food supply to meet their needs.
- Individuals who take medications should maintain an adequate supply and copies of their prescriptions.
- People with service animals should make sure their emergency kit supplies include food and other items necessary to support their service animal.
- People who require power for medical or other assistive devices should consider how they will maintain the use of these devices if there is a loss of power. Keep extra batteries for small devices (hearing aids, cell phones for example) and consider obtaining and learning how to use a generator for home use and carrying a charger when away from home, especially when loss of power may jeopardize health or safety.

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4 PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The public's response to any disaster/emergency is based on an understanding of the nature of the event, the potential hazards, the likely response of emergency services and knowledge of what individuals and groups should do to increase their chances of survival and recovery.

Pre-disaster awareness and education programs must be viewed as equal in importance to all other preparations for emergencies and receive an adequate level of planning. These programs must be coordinated among local, state and federal officials to ensure their contribution to emergency preparedness and response operations. Emergency Public Information procedures are addressed in the **Supporting Documents (Management Section – Support Documentation)**.

5 ANIMAL CARE CONSIDERATIONS

Approximately 57% of California households own a pet. While the care of household pets, service animals, and livestock in disasters does not take precedence over the care of people, providing for animals can facilitate the personal safety and care of a large segment of the human population since most people consider pets an important part of their family.

The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 (PETS Act) directs that state and local emergency preparedness plans address the needs of people with pets and service animals after a major disaster. This includes the rescue, care and sheltering of these animals during a disaster. Additionally, California Assembly Bill 781 (2023) requires that whenever a city or county designates any number of emergency shelters, it also designate at least one emergency shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. A similar action is required with regard to the designation of any cooling/warming centers.

The needs of animals during a disaster have been incorporated into this EOP, especially in the areas of transportation and care and shelter activities outlined in the [Mass Care and Shelter Annex](#). Ventura County Animal Services staff works in tandem with HSA staff during the selection and establishment of shelters/centers for disaster events to ensure compliance with applicable legal statutes and provide options for individuals that require sheltering assistance and bring their pets with them.

6 TRAINING AND EXERCISES

Regular exercises and training are necessary to maintain the readiness of operational procedures. Exercises provide personnel with an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the procedures, facilities and systems which will be used in a disaster. Annual exercises are required by both SEMS and NIMS.

All County Departments are responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and documenting the regular training and exercising of County staff in the use of this EOP and other specific training as required for compliance with both SEMS and NIMS.

The objective is to train and educate public officials, disaster and/or emergency response personnel and volunteers. All staff who may participate in emergency response in the EOC, in department operating centers (DOCs) or at the field level must receive appropriate SEMS/NIMS/ICS training. Training includes classroom instruction and drills. Refer to Cal OES's Training Matrix on their website for specific SEMS/NIMS/ICS classes and target audiences.

The County may use the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (HSEEP) building block concept in the development of its exercise program. Exercises are planned in a cycle that increases in complexity to train and strengthen EOC personnel to specific target capabilities.

Figure 6-1. HSEEP Training Cycle



7 ALERT AND WARNING

Warning is the process of alerting governmental forces and the public to the threat of imminent, extraordinary danger. Success in saving lives and property depends on the timely dissemination of warning and emergency information to people in threatened areas. Depending on the nature of the threat and the populations at risk, warnings can originate at any level of government.

Local government is responsible for warning the populace of the jurisdiction. The County utilizes various modes to alert and warn the community. Special attention is paid to those population groups that may need additional alerting and warning assistance (e.g. persons that are deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, or limited or non-English speakers). The various systems are described in more detail in the [Alert and Warning Annex](#) to this plan.

8 ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

All emergency management operations begin at the local level and, when needed, expand to include Operational Area, regional, state, or federal resources as the affected jurisdiction requires additional support. This model of responding at the local level then bringing in the next tier of support, as outlined in SEMS, also aligns with NIMS. NIMS provides stakeholder agencies across the whole community with a shared vocabulary, systems, and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities in the National Preparedness System.

The NIMS framework defines operational systems that guide how personnel work together during incidents. One of the main components of NIMS is the utilization of ICS. The NIMS represents a core set of doctrine, principles, terminology, and organizational processes to enable effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management at all levels.

8.1 STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The County of Ventura has adopted the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) for managing its response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction emergencies. SEMS incorporates the use of the Incident Command System (ICS), the Master Mutual Aid Agreement and existing mutual aid systems, the Operational Area concept, and multi-agency or inter-agency coordination and to facilitate communications and coordination between all levels of the system and among all responding agencies.

Local governments must use SEMS to be eligible for funding of their personnel-related costs under state disaster assistance programs. California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 19, Division 2, Chapter 1 establishes the standard response structure and basic protocols to be used in emergency response and recovery.

SEMS consists of five levels:

FIELD RESPONSE LEVEL

The field response level is where emergency response personnel and resources, under the command of an appropriate authority, carry out tactical decisions and activities in direct response to an incident or threat. SEMS regulations require the use of the ICS at the field response level of an incident. The ICS field functions to be used for emergency management are command, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance/administration.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL

Local governments include cities, counties, and special districts (e.g., fire, school, harbor, airport, and water districts). Local governments manage and coordinate the overall emergency response and recovery activities within their jurisdiction. To be eligible for state funding of response-related personnel, local governments are required to use SEMS when their emergency operations center is activated, or a local emergency is proclaimed. Local governmental levels shall provide the following functions: management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance/administration. Local jurisdictions are responsible for overall direction of personnel and equipment provided for emergency operations through mutual aid (Government Code Section 8618).

Additional details relating to the organization and responsibilities of the SEMS elements at each of the levels are provided in the **Supporting Documents (Management Section)** of this EOP.

All local governments are responsible for coordinating with the field response level and the Operational Area. Local governments are also responsible for providing mutual aid within their capabilities.

OPERATIONAL AREA LEVEL

Under SEMS, the Operational Area is defined in the Emergency Services Act as an intermediate level of the State emergency services organization, consisting of a county

and all political subdivisions within the county area. Political subdivisions include cities, special districts, and certain public agencies, as authorized by law. The Operational Area is responsible for:

- Coordinating information, resources, and priorities among local governments within the Operational Area
- Coordinating information, resources and priorities between the regional level and the local government level
- Using multi-agency or inter-agency coordination to facilitate decisions for overall Operational Area level emergency response activities.

SEMS regulations specify that all local governments within a county geographic area be organized into a single Operational Area and that the County Board of Supervisors is responsible for its establishment. On November 21, 1995, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted a formal resolution establishing the Ventura County Operational Area. Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services is the lead agency for the Ventura County Operational Area.

When the Ventura County Operational Area EOC is activated, the Sheriff of Ventura County or his designee, is the Operational Area Coordinator and has the overall responsibility for coordinating and supporting disaster/emergency operations within the County. The Operational Area is the focal point for information sharing and support requests by cities within the County. The Operational Area Coordinator and supporting staff constitutes the Operational Area emergency management staff. The Operational Area staff submits all requests for support other than for Law and Fire Mutual Aid that cannot be obtained within the County, and other relevant information, to Cal OES Southern Region, Mutual Aid Region I.

The Ventura County EOC will fulfill the role of the Operational Area EOC.

REGIONAL LEVEL

Due to its large size and geography, California has been divided into six mutual aid regions (See Section 10, **Figure 10-2**). The purpose of a mutual aid region is to provide for the more effective application and coordination of mutual aid and other emergency related activities.

In SEMS, the regional level manages and coordinates information and resources among several operational areas within a region and between these operational areas and the

state level. The regional level also coordinates overall state agency support for emergency response activities within the region.

Cal OES has also established three Administrative Regions (Coastal, Inland and Southern). These Administrative Regions are how Cal OES maintains day-to-day contact with emergency services organizations at local, county, and private sector organizations.

The County of Ventura is within Cal OES' Southern Administrative Region and Region 1 mutual aid region (Region 1A for law enforcement mutual aid).

STATE LEVEL

The state level of SEMS manages state resources in response to the emergency needs of the other levels and coordinates mutual aid among the mutual aid regions and between the regional level and state level. The state level also serves as the coordination and communication link between the state and the federal disaster response system.

FEDERAL LEVEL

Department of Homeland Security

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States; reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies; and minimize damage and assist in the recovery from terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) serves as the main federal government contact during disasters and national security emergencies. In a disaster, different federal agencies may be involved in the response and recovery operations. Federal disaster assistance is organized under the concept of the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) as defined in the National Response Framework (NRF). All contact with FEMA and other federal agencies must be made through the Operational Area during the response phase. During the recovery phase, there may be direct city contact with FEMA and other federal agencies.

8.1.1 SEMS Requirements for Local Governments

The County of Ventura will comply with SEMS regulations to be eligible for state funding of response-related personnel costs and will:

- Use SEMS when:
 - a. A local emergency is declared or proclaimed, or
 - b. The local government EOC is activated
- Establish coordination and communications with Incident Commanders either:
 - a. Through departmental operating centers (DOCs) to the EOC, when activated, or
 - b. Directly to the EOC, when activated
- Use existing mutual aid systems for coordinating fire and law enforcement resources.
- Establish coordination and communications between the County' EOC (when activated), and any state or local emergency response agency having jurisdiction at an incident within the County's boundaries.
- Use multi-agency or inter-agency coordination to facilitate decisions for overall local government level disaster/emergency response activities.

The requirement to use SEMS includes:

- Fulfilling management and coordination role of local government, and
- Providing for the five essential SEMS functions of management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics and finance/administration

8.1.2 County Responsibilities Under SEMS

The development of SEMS will be a cooperative effort of all departments and agencies within the County of Ventura with an emergency response role. Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services has the lead staff responsibility for SEMS development and planning with responsibilities for:

- Communicating information on SEMS requirements and guidelines.
- Coordinating SEMS development among County departments and agencies.
- Identification of all departments and agencies involved in field level response.
- Identification of departments and agencies with a department operations center (DOC).
- Coordinating with other local governments, the Operational Area, and volunteer and private organizations on development of SEMS.
- Incorporating SEMS into the County's EOP and procedures.
- Incorporating SEMS into the County's emergency ordinances, agreements, memorandum of understandings, etc.
- Identification of special districts that operate or provide services within the boundaries of the County of Ventura. The emergency role of these special districts should be determined, and provisions made for coordination during emergencies.
- Identification of local volunteer organizations and private organizations that have an emergency response role. Contacts should be made to develop arrangements for coordination in emergencies.

The County of Ventura will participate in the Ventura County OA organization and system for coordination and communication within the OA.

The County of Ventura ensures that EOC staff participate regularly in emergency management exercises to improve preparedness, response and recovery activities. All local government staff who may participate in emergencies in the EOC, in department operations centers (DOCs), or at the field level must receive appropriate SEMS training as required by SEMS regulations. New personnel should be trained as they are hired.

8.1.3 EOC Organization Under SEMS

SEMS regulations require local governments to provide five functions that are the basis for structuring the EOC organization:

Table 8-1. Essential SEMS Functions

| Essential SEMS Functions | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Management | Overall emergency policy and coordination through the joint efforts of governmental agencies and private organizations |
| Operations | Coordinate all jurisdictional operations in support of the emergency response through implementation of the County's EOC Action Plan. |
| Planning/ Intelligence | Collect, evaluate, and disseminate information; develop the County of Ventura's EOC Action Plan and After-Action/Corrective Action Report in coordination with other functions; and maintaining documentation. |
| Logistics | Provide facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and |
| Finance/ Administration | Financial activities and other administrative aspects. |

The EOC organization may include representatives from state agencies, special districts, volunteer organizations, and private agencies with significant response roles.

8.1.4 Major SEMS Components

Organization Flexibility - Modular Organization

The five essential SEMS functions will be established as “sections” within the EOC, and all other functions will be organized as branches, groups, or units within sections. The types of activated functions and their relationship to one another will depend upon the size and nature of the incident. Only those functional elements that are required to meet current objectives will be activated. Those functions which are needed but not staffed will be the responsibility of the next higher element in the organization.

Management of Personnel - Hierarchy of Command and Span-of-Control

The position title “Coordinator” refers to the lead person of each organizational element in the EOC. The term coordinator is used because the role of EOC elements is to coordinate. Each activated function will have a person in charge of it, but a supervisor may oversee more than one functional element. Every individual will have a supervisor. Each supervisor will generally be responsible for no more than seven employees, with the ideal span-of-control being three to five persons.

Section Coordinators for Operations, Planning/Intelligence, Logistics and Finance/Administration constitute the EOC General Staff. Management and General Staff function as the EOC management team. The General Staff are responsible for:

- Overseeing the internal functioning of their section, and
- Interacting with each other, Management, and other entities within the EOC ensure the effective functioning of the EOC organization.

EOC Action Plans

At local, operational area, regional and state levels, the use of EOC action plans provide designated personnel with knowledge of the objectives to be achieved and the steps required for achievement. Action plans not only provide direction, but they also serve to provide a basis for measuring achievement of objectives and overall system performance. Action planning is an important management tool that involves:

- A process for identifying priorities and objectives for emergency response or recovery efforts
- Documentation of the priorities and objectives, the tasks and personnel assignments associated with meeting them.

The action planning process should involve Management and General Staff along with other EOC elements, special district representatives and other agency representatives, as needed. The Planning/Intelligence Section is responsible for coordinating the development of the action plan and for facilitation of action planning meetings.

Action plans are developed for a specified operational period which may range from a few hours to 24 hours. The operational period is determined by first establishing a set of priority actions that need to be performed. A reasonable time frame is then established for accomplishing those actions.

EOC Action plans need not be complex but should be sufficiently detailed to guide EOC elements in implementing the priority actions. Guidelines for developing action plans are contained in Support Documentation – Planning/Intelligence_Action Planning.

8.1.5 SEMS Coordination

Multi-Agency or Inter-Agency Coordination at the local government level is important for:

- Establishing priorities for response
- Allocating critical resources
- Developing strategies for handling multi-agency response problems
- Sharing information
- Facilitating communications

Multi-Agency / Inter-Agency Coordination in the EOC

- Emergency response is coordinated at the EOC through:
 - a. Representatives from the County of Ventura's departments and agencies
 - b. Representatives from outside agencies including cities, special districts, volunteer agencies and private organizations.
- Coordination with agencies not represented in the EOC may be accomplished through various methods of communications.
- Involvement in the EOC action planning process is essential for effective emergency management.

Multi-Agency / Inter-agency Coordination Groups (MACs or IACGs)

- May be established formally.
- Should develop consensus on priorities, resource allocation, and response strategies.
- May function within the EOC, at another location or through conference calls—but should remain in contact with the EOC. The IACG has separate meeting and communications facilities adjacent to the EOC.
- EOC Action Plan should incorporate group priorities and objectives.
- Group objectives should be implemented through the EOC.

- The County may participate with other local governments and agencies in a MAC group organized by another local government, operational area, or at the regional level.

Coordination at the Field Response Level

Coordination among SEMS levels is necessary for effective emergency response. In a major emergency, the County of Ventura's EOC may be activated to coordinate the overall response while the ICS is used by field responders. Incident Commanders may report to department operations centers (DOCs) which in turn will coordinate with the EOC.

Coordination at the Ventura County Operational Area Level

Coordination and communications should be established between activated local government EOCs and the Operational Area. For the County of Ventura, this channel is through the Sheriff's Emergency Services Duty Officer (when the County EOC is not activated), and through the Operational Area EOC (when the OA EOC is activated). The communications links are telephone, satellite phone, radio, video conferencing, data (DLAN) and the Ventura County Auxiliary Communications Services (ACS) radio system, runner, etc.

Coordination with Special Districts

Special districts are limited purpose local governments – separate from cities and counties. Within their boundaries, special districts provide focused public services such as fire protection, sewers, water supply, electricity, parks, recreation, sanitation, cemeteries, and libraries. The disaster/emergency response role of special districts is therefore generally focused on continuation and maintenance of their normal services. Some types of special districts, such as fire or water districts, may be more extensively involved in the disaster/emergency response by assisting other local governments.

Coordination and communications should be established among special districts which are involved in disaster/emergency response, other local governments and the Operational Area. This may be accomplished in various ways depending on the local situation. Relationships among special districts, cities, county government and the Operational Area are often complicated by overlapping boundaries and by the number and variety of special districts that may exist in an area. Special districts need to work with the local governments in their service areas to determine how best to establish coordination and communications in disasters/emergencies.

Special districts frequently extend across municipal boundary lines, and may serve several cities as well as county unincorporated areas (e.g., water districts). Some special districts serve more than one county. In such a situation, the special district may wish to provide a liaison representative to the OA EOC to facilitate coordination and communication with the various entities it serves.

Coordination with Volunteer and Private Organizations

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) that play key roles (e.g., Red Cross) in disaster/emergency response may have representatives at the EOC. If an agency supports several functions and has only one representative at the EOC, the agency representative should be located at the liaison area. If an agency is supporting one function only (e.g. Operations), its representative may be located with that functional element. Some agencies may have several personnel participating in functional elements in the EOC. Agencies that have countywide response roles and cannot respond to numerous city EOCs should be represented at the OA level.

Coordination with volunteer and private organizations that do not have representatives at the EOC may be accomplished through telecommunications, liaison with community councils that represent several agencies or involvement of agencies in special multi-agency groups on specific issues.

Ventura County Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) personnel may be assigned to agencies as needed.

The County of Ventura supports and participates in Ventura County-VOAD (VC-VOAD). VC-VOAD is a collaborative of local non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, volunteer groups, public institutions, and private entities dedicated to improving outcomes for people affected by disasters/emergencies. The Sheriff's Emergency Services incorporates a VC-VOAD liaison position in the County EOC which serves as a focal point for coordination of response activities with many non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and other community-based organizations.

8.2 NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In addition to SEMS, the County recognizes and has incorporated the National Incident Management System ¹⁴ (NIMS) into the EOP, training, and exercises. NIMS is centered

¹⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency, *National Management System*, Third Edition, 2017.

around the concepts of flexibility, a standard organizational structure with common terminology, and a unity of effort.

- **Flexibility** - NIMS components are adaptable to any situation, from planned special events to routine local incidents, to incidents involving interstate mutual aid or Federal assistance. Some incidents need multiagency, multijurisdictional, and/or multidisciplinary coordination. Flexibility allows NIMS to be scalable and, therefore, applicable for incidents that vary widely in terms of hazard, geography, demographics, climate, cultural, and organizational authorities.
- **Standardization** - Standardization is essential to interoperability among multiple organizations in incident response. NIMS defines standard organizational structures that improve integration and connectivity among jurisdictions and organizations. NIMS defines standard practices that allow incident personnel to work together effectively and foster cohesion among the various organizations involved. NIMS also includes common terminology, which enables effective communication.
- **Unity of Effort** - Unity of effort means coordinating activities among various organizations to achieve common objectives. Unity of effort enables organizations with specific jurisdictional responsibilities to support each other while maintaining their own authorities.

8.2.1 Resource Management

Most jurisdictions or organizations do not own and maintain all the resources necessary to address all potential threats and hazards. NIMS resource management guidance enables many organizational elements to collaborate and coordinate to systematically manage resources—personnel, teams, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Effective resource management includes leveraging each jurisdiction’s resources, engaging private sector resources, involving volunteer organizations, and encouraging further development of mutual aid agreements.

This component includes three sections:

- **Resource Management Preparedness** - involves identifying and typing resources; qualifying, certifying, and credentialing personnel; planning for resources; and acquiring, storing, and inventorying resources.

- **Resource Management During an Incident** - The resource management process during an incident includes utilizing standard methods to identify, order, mobilize, and track resources.
- **Mutual Aid** - Mutual aid involves sharing resources and services between jurisdictions or organizations.

8.2.2 Command and Coordination

NIMS standard incident command structures are based on the following key organizational systems:

- **The ICS** - A standardized, on-scene, all-hazard incident management concept whose organizational structure allows users to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.
- **Emergency Operations Centers** - Locations where staff from multiple agencies typically come together to provide coordinated support to incident command, on-scene personnel, and/or other EOCs during an emergency. EOCs may be fixed locations, temporary facilities, or virtual structures with staff participating remotely.
- **Multiagency Coordination Groups (MACs)** - Groups consisting of representatives from stakeholder agencies or organizations that are established and organized to make cooperative multiagency decisions. MACs act as policy-level bodies during incidents, supporting resource prioritization and allocation, and enabling decision making among elected and appointed officials and those responsible for managing the incident (e.g., the Incident Commander). In some instances, EOC staff also carry out this activity. MACs are part of the off-site incident management structure of NIMS.
- **Joint Information System (JIS)** - JISs consist of the processes, procedures, and tools to enable communication to the public, incident personnel, the media, and other stakeholders.

8.2.3 Communications and Information Management

Communications and Information Management describes systems and methods that help to ensure that incident personnel and other decision makers have the information and means they need to make and communicate decisions. The four key principles of

Communications and Information Management are: 1) Interoperability; 2) Reliability, Scalability, and Portability; 3) Resilience and Redundancy; and 4) Security.

- **Communications Management** – Includes communications management practices and considerations such as Standardized Communication Types, Policy and Planning, Agreements, Equipment Standards and Training to assist incident personnel from different disciplines, jurisdictions, organizations and agencies communicate with each other effectively during incidents.
- **Incident Information** - During an incident, personnel need timely and accurate information to make effective decisions. Incident Reports (Situation Reports and Status Reports) enhance situational awareness and help ensure that personnel have easier access to essential information. Incident Action Plans (IAPs) contain the incident objectives that the Incident Commander or Unified Command establishes, and address tactics for the planned operational period, generally the next 12 to 24 hours. Personnel should collect data in a manner that observes standard data collection techniques and definitions, analyze the data, and share it through the appropriate channels.
- **Communications Standards and Formats** – NIMS requires the use of common terminology, plain language, data interoperability and the incorporation of technology (radio and telephone systems, public warning and notification systems, hardware and software, Geographic Information Systems and social media) as a mechanism to offer increased situational awareness to jurisdictions involved in the incident and/or the public.

8.3 VENTURA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

This section establishes policies and procedures and assigns responsibilities to ensure the effective management of the County’s emergency operations under the SEMS and NIMS. The Sheriff, who serves as the County’s Director of Emergency Services, will direct the County’s Emergency Management Organization (including emergency response and recovery operations). The County’s Director of Emergency Services is responsible to the Board of Supervisors per Ordinance 4410 of the County of Ventura’s Municipal Code and is responsible for implementing the County’s EOP. The Director of Emergency Services may appoint an EOC Director.

The County’s Director of Emergency Services and EOC Director have overall responsibility for:

- Organizing, staffing, and operating the County Operational Area EOC
- Operating communications and Alert and Warning systems
- Providing information and guidance to the public
- Maintaining information on the status of resources, services, and operations
- Coordinating overall operations
- Obtaining support for the County and providing support to other jurisdictions as required
- Identifying and analyzing potential hazards and recommending appropriate countermeasures
- Collecting, evaluating, and disseminating damage assessment and other essential information
- Providing status and other reports to Cal OES

8.3.1 County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

The County's EOC is a centralized location from which emergency management can be performed during a major emergency or disaster. This facilitates a coordinated response by the County's Director of Emergency Services, emergency management staff and representatives from organizations who are assigned emergency management responsibilities.

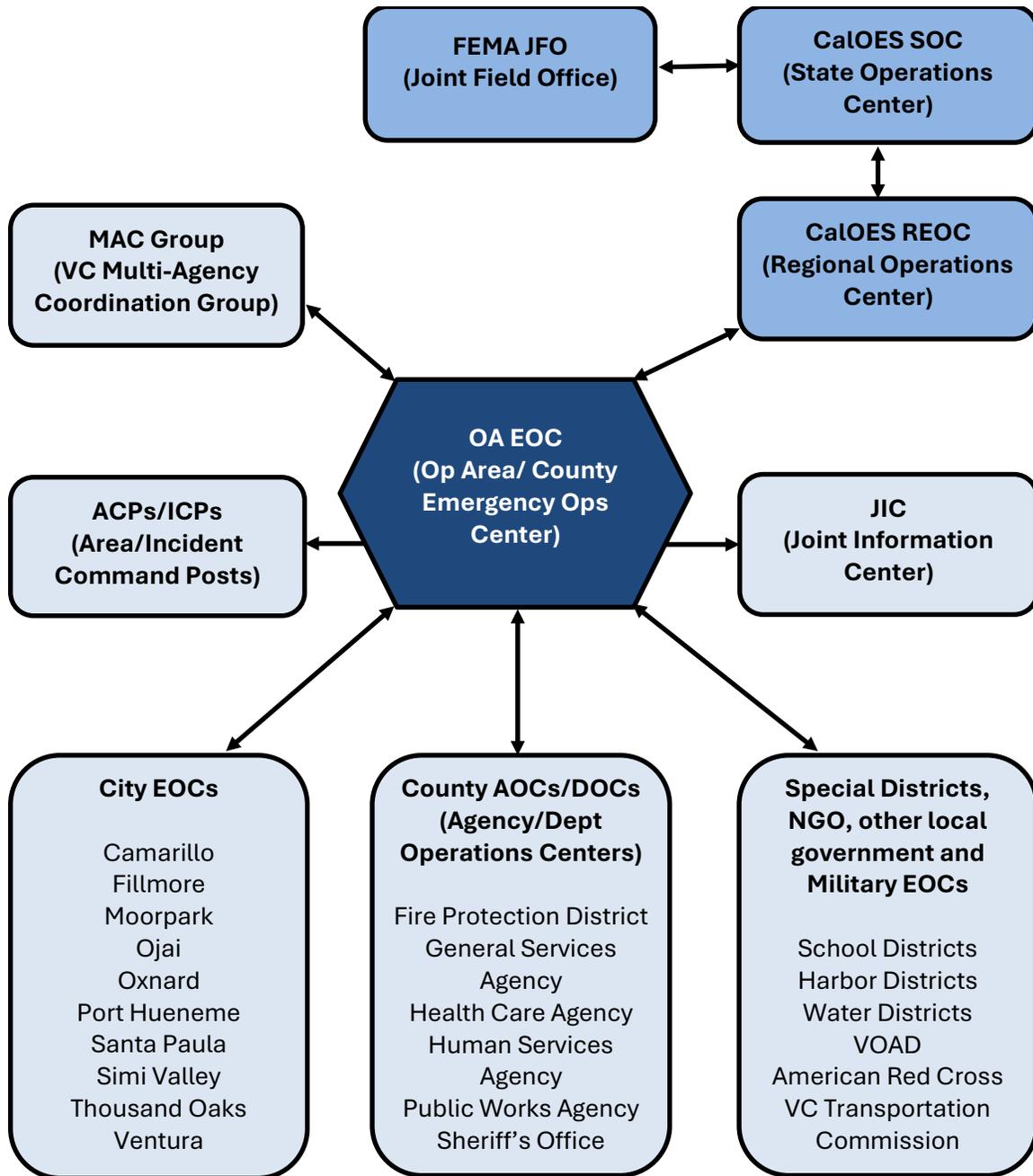
An EOC provides a central location of authority and information during an incident and allows for face-to-face coordination among personnel who must make emergency decisions. The following functions are performed in the County of Ventura's EOC:

- Coordinating emergency operations
- Receiving and disseminating Alert and Warning information
- Developing emergency policies and procedures
- Collecting intelligence from, and disseminating information to, the various EOC representatives, and, as appropriate, to city, County, Operational Area, State, military, and federal agencies
- Preparing intelligence/information summaries, situation reports, operational reports, and other reports as required

- Maintaining general and specific maps, information display boards, and other data pertaining to emergency operations
- Continuing analysis and evaluation of all data pertaining to emergency operations
- Controlling and coordinating, within established policy, the operational and logistical support of County resources committed to the emergency
- Maintaining contact and coordination with support DOCs, and other local government EOCs
- Providing emergency information and instructions to the public, making official releases to the news media and the scheduling of press conferences as necessary

If the Ventura County EOC is activated, the Sheriff of Ventura County or their designee, will function as the Operational Area Coordinator, and will have overall responsibility for coordinating and supporting emergency operations within the County. The Operational Area EOC will also be the focal point for information transfer and support requests by cities and special districts within the County via the County's EOC (See **Figure 8-1**).

Figure 8-1. Ventura County Operational Area Organization Chart



The Operational Area Coordinator and supporting staff will constitute the Operational Area emergency management staff. The staff will submit all requests for support that cannot be obtained within the county (other than for Law and Fire Mutual Aid), and other relevant information, to Cal OES Mutual Aid Region I. Fire mutual aid and Law Enforcement mutual aid are coordinated through the designated Regional Fire and Law Enforcement Coordinators.

The County agencies designated as having primary or supporting roles or responsibilities in the County Emergency Operations Center's operation are identified in the matrix contained in **Table 8-2**.

Reporting to the Ventura County Operational Area

City reports and notifications to be made to the Ventura County OA include:

- Activation of any City EOC
- Proclamation of a Local Emergency
- City Status Reports
- Initial Damage Estimates
- Major Incident Reports

Mutual Aid Region Emergency Management

The County of Ventura is located within Cal OES Mutual Aid Region 1 for Fire, Cal OES Region 1a for Law and the Medical Examiner, and the Cal OES Southern Administrative Region. The primary mission of Southern Region's emergency management organization is to support Operational Area response and recovery operations and to coordinate non-law and non-fire Mutual Aid Regional response and recovery operations through the Regional EOC (REOC).

State Emergency Management

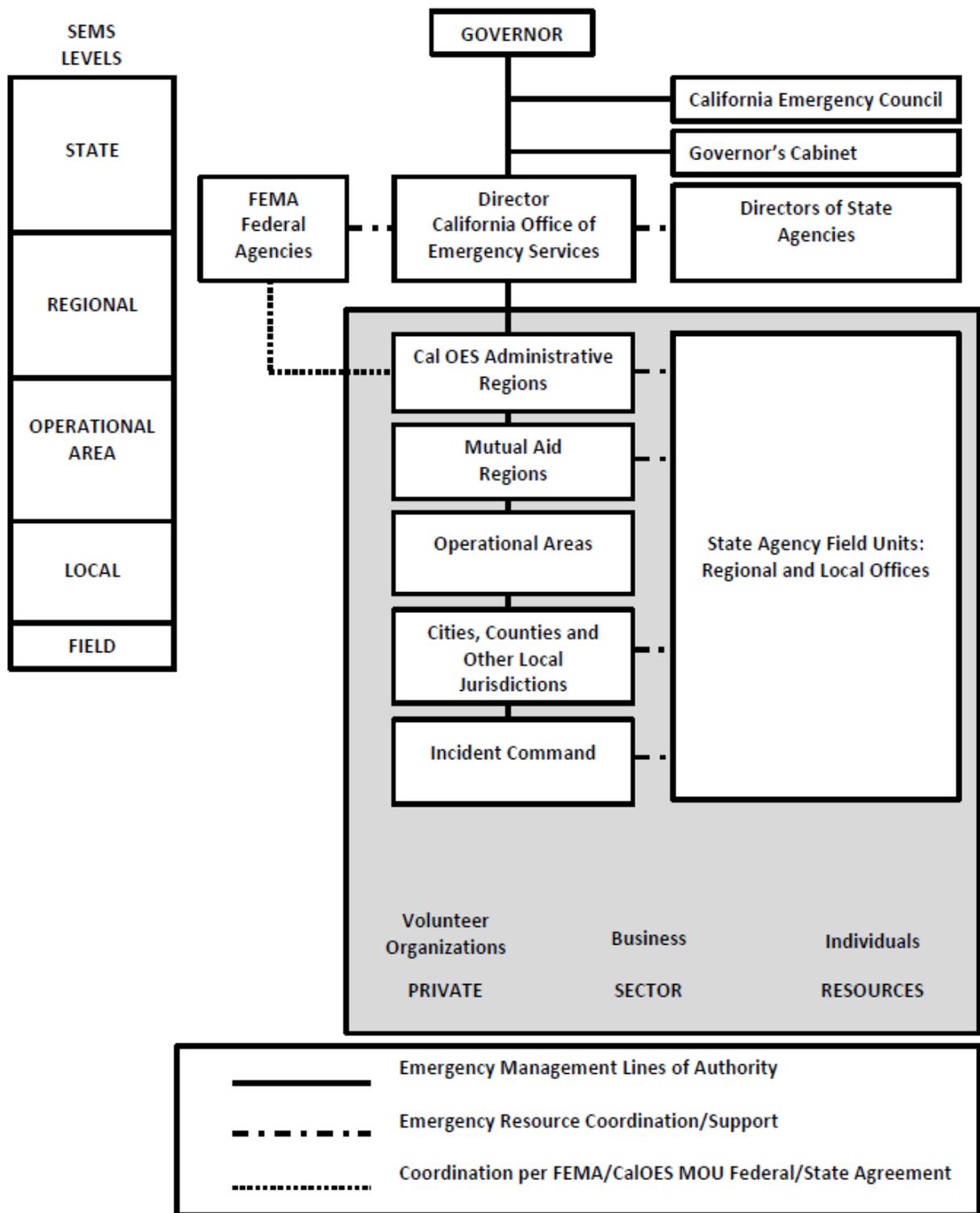
The Governor, through Cal OES and its Mutual Aid Regions, will coordinate statewide operations to include the provision of mutual aid and other support to local jurisdictions and the redirection of essential supplies and other resources as required. The State of California Emergency Organization Chart is shown in **Figure 8-2**.

Table 8-2. Emergency Operations Center Organization Matrix

Table Notes: P=Primary Agency S=Supporting Agency

| Ventura County EOC Organization Matrix | | Airports | Animal Services | Assessor | Auditor | BOS | CEO | Clerk/Recorder | County Counsel | District Attorney | Fire | General | Harbor | Health Care | HR | Human Services | Info. Systems | Med. Examiner | Public Works | Resource Mgmt. | Sheriff | Utilities | Vol. Agencies | School Districts | VCTC |
|--|---------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|---------|-----|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------------|------|---------|--------|-------------|----|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------|-----------|---------------|------------------|------|
| MANAGEMENT | Policy | | | | | S | P | | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | S | | | |
| | EOC Director | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Liaison Officer | | | | | | P | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | S | | | |
| | P.I.O. | | | | | | S | | | S | | | | S | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Legal Advisor | | | | | | | | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | EOC Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Safety Officer | | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | S | P | | | | |
| AFN Coordinator | | | | | | S | | | | | | | S | | P | | | | | S | | | | | |
| OPERATIONS | Ops. Coordinator | | | | | | S | | | | S | | | S | | | | | S | | P | S | S | | |
| | Fire/HazMat | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | | | | | S | S | S | | | | |
| | Law Enforcement | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | S | | | | | P | | | |
| | Infrastructure | | | | | | | | | | | S | | S | | | | | P | S | | S | | | |
| | Care & Shelter | P | | | | | | | | | | | S | S | | P | | | | | | | S | S | S |
| | Med./Pub. Health | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | S | | | | | | | | | |
| | Medical Examiner | | | | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | P | | | | | | | |
| | Bldg. & Safety | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | |
| Alert & Warning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | |
| PLANNING | Plans/Intel. Coord. | | | | | | S | S | | | S | S | | S | | S | | | | S | P | | S | | |
| | Sit/Res Status | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Damage Assess | | | S | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Documentation | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Advance Planning | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | Recovery Planning | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | |
| | GIS Mapping | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | S | | | | | P | | | |
| Demobilization | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | |
| LOGISTICS | Logistics Coord. | | | | | | S | | | | P | S | | | | S | | | | | S | | S | | |
| | Supply/Acquisition | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | | | | | | P | S | | | | |
| | Personnel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | P | | | | | | | | S | | |
| | Facilities/Transp. | S | S | | | | | | | | P | S | | | | | | | | | | | | S | S |
| | Support Staff - ITS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINANCE | Finance Coord. | | | | P | | S | | | | S | | | | S | | | | | | S | | S | | |
| | Cost Recovery | | S | | | | | | | | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | | S | S | P | | | | |
| | Time Keeping | | | | P | | | | | | S | | | | S | | | | | | S | | S | | |
| | Cost Analysis | | | | P | | | | | | S | | | | S | | | | | | S | | S | | |
| RECOVERY | | | | | S | P | | S | | | S | | S | S | S | | | | S | S | S | S | S | S | |

Figure 8-2. California Emergency Organization Chart



8.3.2 County EOC Activation

The County EOC may be activated for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, when field response agencies or jurisdictions need support, a countywide perspective is needed, or multiple departments or jurisdictions need to coordinate to respond to an incident or threat of an incident.

Sheriff's Emergency Services personnel will activate the County EOC at the appropriate level based on the support requirements of the incident, including its size, scope, and complexity, as depicted in **Table 8-2**. The EOC may be partially or fully staffed to meet the demands of the situation.

Activation of the Operational Area EOC during a State of Emergency or a Local Emergency is required by SEMS regulations under the following conditions:

1. A local government within the operational area activates its EOC and requests activation of the OA EOC to support their emergency operations
2. Two or more cities within the OA proclaim a Local Emergency
3. The County and one or more cities proclaim a Local Emergency
4. A city, city and county, or county requests a governor's proclamation of a State of Emergency, as defined in the Government Code, Section 8558(b)
5. A State of Emergency is proclaimed by the Governor for Ventura County or two or more cities within the Operational Area
6. The operational area requests resources from outside its boundaries. This does not include resources used in normal day-to-day operations which are obtained through existing mutual aid or auto aid agreements

Table 8-3. EOC Activation Levels

| Activation Level | | Description | Staffing |
|------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Full Activation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A situation or threat requires 24/7 coordination, monitoring and support • Incident may require extensive response and recovery efforts and significant resources | <p>All General Staff positions activated, including applicable liaison positions</p> <p>Operations are being conducted on a 24-hour basis</p> |
| 2 | Partial Activation | A situation or threat has developed that requires coordination extending beyond the normal workday | EOC is partially staffed; limited or partial liaison support and technical specialist (based on incident needs) |
| 3 | Enhanced Operations | A situation or threat has developed that requires enhanced monitoring and coordination between jurisdictions or agencies | Duty Officer plus limited essential personnel focused on situational awareness |
| 4 | Normal Operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine monitoring of low-level situations • No event or incident is anticipated | Duty Officer only |

8.3.2.1 Potential Activation of the County EOC

- An emergency that has occurred or might occur of such a magnitude that it will require a large commitment of resources from two or more County Departments over an extended period;
- On the order of the Sheriff or designee when the County or parts of the County have been impacted or threatened by a hazard. A Local Emergency may be proclaimed;
- When the Governor has proclaimed a State of Emergency in an area which includes the County of Ventura;
- Automatically upon the proclamation of a "State of War Emergency" as defined by the California Emergency Services Act (**See *County of Ventura Manual for Local Emergencies***);
- By a Presidential Declaration of a National Emergency;
- Automatically upon receipt of a nuclear attack warning or the observation of a nuclear detonation;
- A significant ¹⁵earthquake has caused damage in Ventura County or neighboring jurisdictions;
- Upon notification of an uncontrolled release or failure of any dam that may impact Ventura County.

8.3.2.2 Who Can Activate the EOC

The following individuals, either acting as the EOC Director or on behalf of the EOC Director, or their appointed representatives are authorized to activate the Ventura County EOC:

- Sheriff (County Director of Emergency Services) or their designee
- Board of Supervisors
- Chief Executive Officer

¹⁵ The California Department of conservation defines 'significant' as an earthquake of magnitude greater than or equal to 6.5, or that caused loss of life or more than \$200,000 in damage. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/earthquakes/big>

- County Fire Chief
- Director of Public Works
- Health Care Agency – County Health Officer

8.3.2.3 How to Request EOC Activation

- Contact the Ventura County Sheriff Emergency Services Duty Officer or Sheriff’s Director of Emergency Services.
- Identify yourself and provide a callback confirmation phone number if requested.
- Briefly describe the disaster/emergency triggering the request.

8.3.2.4 Deactivation of the EOC

EOC deactivation occurs when the incident no longer needs the support and coordination functions provided by the County. This can happen with the resolution of the event or with the local jurisdiction or agency being able to meet the needs of the continued response, per SEMS. There may be multiple steps to deactivation, such as having the EOC activated at a lower level, before full deactivation. Section Coordinators and the EOC Director will generally authorize EOC deactivation by position and function.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the transition into long-term recovery efforts may continue beyond EOC deactivation. Sheriff’s Emergency Services staff will ensure that demobilization and the transfer of authority and support are completed before deactivating the EOC.

8.3.3 EOC Location and Capabilities

The County’s EOC is located at 165 Durley Avenue, Camarillo. It includes work areas for each of the five SEMS functions and is equipped with internet, telephone service (from the County, AT&T and Verizon), facsimile machines, OASIS telephone and data lines, VC Alert, Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) – Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS), portable cellular service (by both area providers), satellite internet, satellite phone and public service radio systems (remote and local bases). In addition, the EOC is supported by members of the Auxiliary Communication Services.

A primary diesel generator and backup generator provide emergency power to the EOC. The emergency fuel reserve is adequate for at least 72 hours. Resupply of emergency fuel will be obtained through Ventura County General Services/Fleet Services Division. Backup

power will provide for lighting panels, selected wall circuits, telephones and radios, data systems and air conditioning. The EOC and has the capability to house and feed staff with on-site services that include a kitchen, bathrooms, and food and water supply.

8.3.4 Alternate EOC Locations

In the event the primary County EOC is damaged, inaccessible, and/or evacuation of EOC staff members becomes necessary, an alternate EOC location will be activated. The alternate EOC location for the County is mobile and includes the setup of a tent and portable equipment at any location necessary.

If the primary EOC is determined to be unusable before its activation, staff members will be asked to report directly to the alternate EOC site. If use of an alternate EOC becomes necessary after an activation has been initiated, the EOC's Logistics Section will arrange for relocation of EOC staff to the alternate EOC. The EOC Director will transfer direction and control authority from the primary EOC to the alternate EOC when necessary. All Section Coordinators will advise their emergency response field forces of the transition to the alternate EOC.

The operational capabilities of the alternate EOC will be similar to those of the primary EOC.

9 CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

A major disaster or national security emergency could result in the death or injury of key government officials, the partial or complete destruction of established seats of government, and damage to public and private records essential to continued operations of the government and economy. The California Government Code Section 8643(b) and the Constitution of California provide the authority for state and local government to reconstitute itself in the event incumbents are unable to serve.

9.1 LINES OF SUCCESSION

Orders of Succession are provisions that enable an orderly and predefined transition of leadership should the County's leadership become incapacitated or otherwise unavailable during an emergency event. Having personnel who are authorized and prepared to carry out emergency actions for government in the event of a disaster ensures continuity of effective leadership, authority and adequate direction of emergency and recovery operations (preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation).

Article 15, Section 8638 of the California Emergency Services Act (CESA) authorizes governing bodies to designate and appoint three standby officers for each member of the governing body and for the chief executive, if not a member of the governing body. Standby officers may be residents or officers of a political subdivision other than to which they are appointed. Standby officers take the same oath as regular officers and are designated as Number 1, 2, or 3.

The Board of Supervisors appoints a successor to the position of County Director of Emergency Services. Should the Director be unavailable or unable to serve, the positions listed below, in order, shall become the acting County Director of Emergency Services:

First Alternate: Undersheriff

Second Alternate: Assistant Sheriff – Patrol Services

Third Alternate: Assistant Sheriff – Special Services

The individual who serves as acting Director shall have the authority and powers of the Director and will serve until the Director is again able to serve, or until the Board of Supervisors appoints a successor. Notification of any successor changes shall be made through the established chain of command.

Article 15, Section 8637 of the CESA authorizes political subdivisions to provide for the succession of officers (department heads) having duties related to law and order and/or health and safety. **Table 9-1** provides a list of applicable alternate officers for key County departments/agencies.

Article 15, Section 8644 of the CESA establishes a method for reconstituting the governing body. It authorizes that, should all members, including all standbys, be unavailable, temporary officers shall be appointed as follows:

- By the chairman of the board of the county in which the political subdivision is located, or
- By the chairman of the board of any other county within 150 miles (from nearest and most populated down to farthest and least populated).
- By the mayor of any city within 150 miles (from nearest and most populated down to farthest and least populated).

Article 15, Section 8642 CESA authorizes local governing bodies to convene as soon as possible whenever a State of War Emergency, State of Emergency, or Local Emergency exists, and at a place not necessarily within the political subdivision.

Article 15, Section 8643 CESA describes the duties of a governing body during emergencies as follows:

- Ascertain the damage to the jurisdiction and its personnel and property.
- Reconstitute itself and any subdivisions.
- Perform functions in preserving law and order and furnishing local services.

Table 9-1. Lines of Succession for County Department Heads

| DEPARTMENT/AGENCY | TITLE/POSITION | |
|-------------------------|----------------|---|
| Assessor | 1 | Assessor |
| | 2 | Chief Deputy Assessor |
| | 3 | Chief Appraiser |
| Auditor-Controller | 1 | Auditor-Controller (AC) |
| | 2 | Assistant Auditor-Controller |
| | 3 | Chief Deputy AC, Property Tax Division |
| *Board of Supervisors | 1 | Chair |
| | 2 | Vice Chair |
| | 3 | Other Elected Official (TBD) |
| *County Clerk/Recorder | 1 | County Clerk/Recorder |
| | 2 | Assistant County Clerk/Recorder |
| | 3 | Assistant Registrar of Voters |
| County Executive Office | 1 | County Executive Officer |
| | 2 | Assistant County Executive Officer |
| | 3 | Assistant County Executive Officer |
| *District Attorney | 1 | District Attorney |
| | 2 | Chief Assistant District Attorney |
| | 3 | Chief Deputy District Attorney |
| Fire Department | 1 | Chief |
| | 2 | Deputy Chief |
| | 3 | Assistant Chief |
| General Services Agency | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Chief Deputy Director |
| | 3 | Chief Deputy Director |
| Health Care Agency | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Deputy Director |
| | 3 | Deputy Director |
| Human Services Agency | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Deputy Director - Administration |
| | 3 | Deputy Director – Adult Family Services |

| DEPARTMENT/AGENCY | TITLE/POSITION | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Information Technology Services | 1 | Chief Information Officer |
| | 2 | Assistant Chief Information Officer |
| | 3 | Deputy Chief Information Officer |
| Medical Examiner | 1 | Chief Medical Examiner |
| | 2 | Assistant Chief Medical Examiner |
| | 3 | Chief Operating Officer |
| Probation Agency | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Chief Deputy |
| | 3 | Chief Deputy |
| Public Health Services | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Health Officer |
| | 3 | Director of Nursing |
| Public Works Agency | 1 | Director Transportation Department |
| | 2 | Director Watershed Protection District |
| | 3 | Director Engineering Services Department |
| | 4 | Director Water and Sanitation Department |
| | 5 | Director Central Services Department |
| Resource Management Agency | 1 | Director |
| | 2 | Deputy Director |
| | 3 | |
| *Sheriff's Office | 1 | Sheriff |
| | 2 | Undersheriff |
| | 3 | Assistant Sheriff – Support Services Division |
| | 4 | Assistant Sheriff – Operations Division |
| *Treasurer – Tax Collector | 1 | Treasurer |
| | 2 | Assistant Treasurer |
| | 3 | Accounting Manager – Tax Collection |
| | 4 | Accounting Manager - Treasury |

Note: * indicates elected officials

9.2 ALTERNATE COUNTY SEATS

In the event the primary seat of County government is compromised or inaccessible because of emergency conditions, Section 23600 of the California Government Code provides for the designation of alternate County seats by the County Board of Supervisors:

- Seats may be located outside County boundaries.
- Real property cannot be purchased for this purpose.
- Additional sites may be designated after the original site designations, if warranted.
- A resolution designating the alternate County seats must be filed with the Secretary of State.

The alternate County seats for the County of Ventura have been designated as follows:

1st Alternate: Camarillo

2nd Alternate: Thousand Oaks

9.3 PRESERVATION OF VITAL RECORDS

Vital records are records that, if damaged or destroyed, would significantly disrupt operations and information flow and require replacement or re-creation at considerable expense or inconvenience. They are defined as those records that are essential to:

- **Protect and preserve the rights and interests of individuals, governments, corporations, and other entities.** Examples include vital statistics, land and tax records, license registers, and articles of incorporation.
- **Conduct emergency response and recovery operations.** Records of this type include utility system maps, locations of emergency supplies and equipment, emergency operations plans and procedures, personnel rosters, etc.
- **Reestablish normal governmental functions and protect the rights and interests of government.** Examples include constitutions and charters, statutes and ordinances, court records, official proceedings and financial records.

Although each department within the County should identify, maintain, and protect its own essential records, the following individuals are responsible for the preservation of the County's vital records:

- 1. County Clerk and Recorder**
- 2. Assistant County Clerk and Recorder**

Vital Records depositories should be located well away from potential danger zones and/or housed in facilities designed to withstand blasts, fire, water, and other destructive forces. Such action will ensure that constitutions and charters, statutes and ordinances, court records, official proceedings, and financial records remain available following any disaster/emergency.

10 MUTUAL AID

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Mutual aid is designed to ensure that adequate resources, facilities, and other support are provided to jurisdictions whenever their own resources prove to be inadequate to cope with a given situation(s). The basis for the system is the California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, as provided for in the California Emergency Services Act. This agreement was developed in 1950 and has been adopted by the State of California, all 58 counties and most incorporated cities in the state.

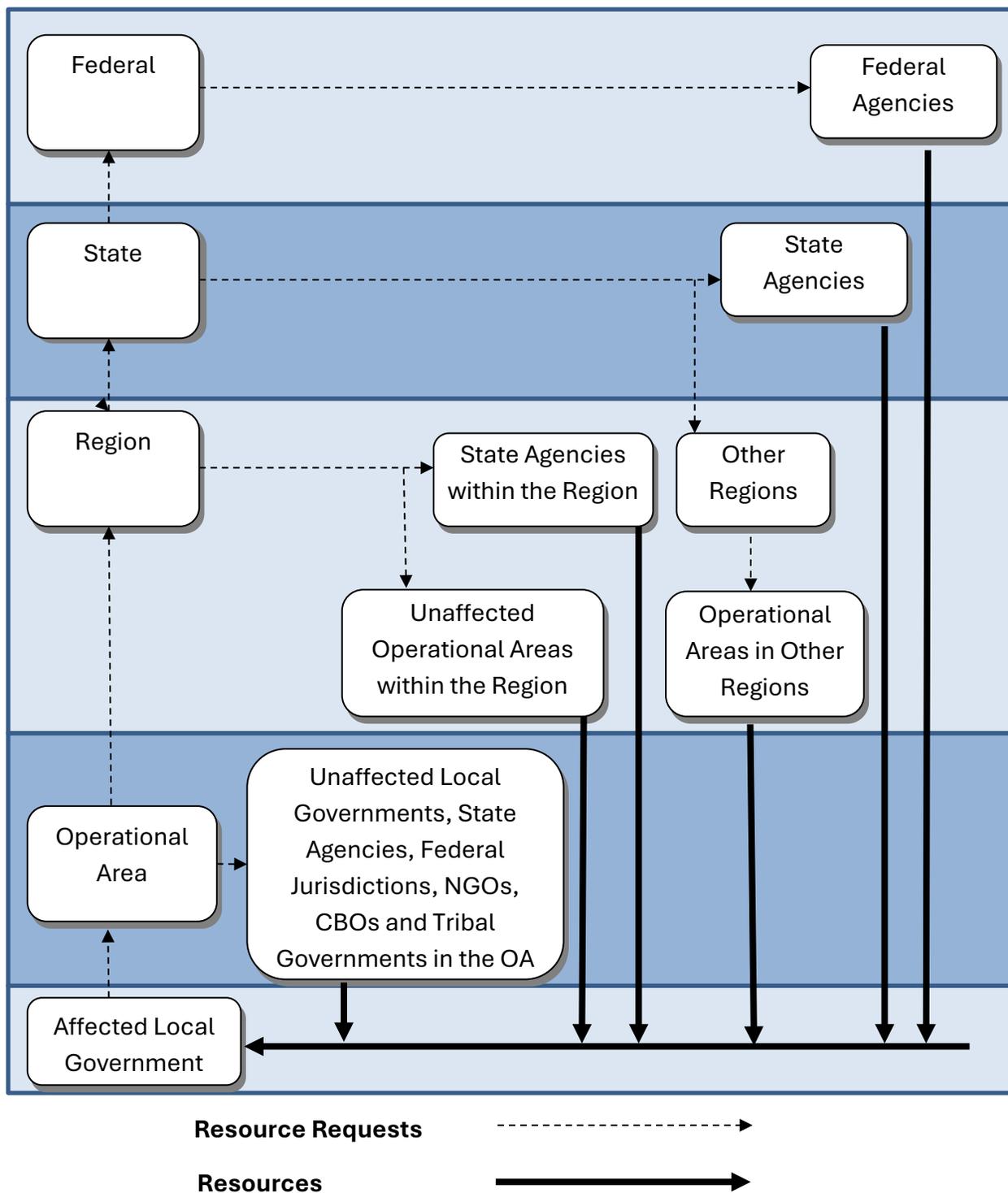
The Master Mutual Aid Agreement creates a formal structure wherein each local jurisdiction retains control of its own facilities, personnel, and resources, but may receive or render assistance to other jurisdictions within the state of California upon request. A key aspect of this control is the ability to communicate official requests, situation reports, and emergency information during a disaster. State government is obligated to provide available resources to assist local jurisdictions in emergencies.

It is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction to negotiate, coordinate and prepare mutual aid agreements. Mutual aid agreements exist in law enforcement, fire services, building and safety, medical, public works, and emergency management. Additionally, in September 2005 the Governor signed the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) which allows the state of California to participate with the other 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands in a nationwide mutual aid system.

10.2 MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS

A statewide mutual aid system, operating within the framework of the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, allows for the progressive mobilization of resources to and from emergency response agencies, local governments, operational areas, regions and state with the intent to provide requesting agencies with adequate resources. The general flow of mutual aid resource requests and resources within mutual aid systems are depicted in **Figure 10-1**.

Figure 10-1. Mutual Aid System Flow Chart

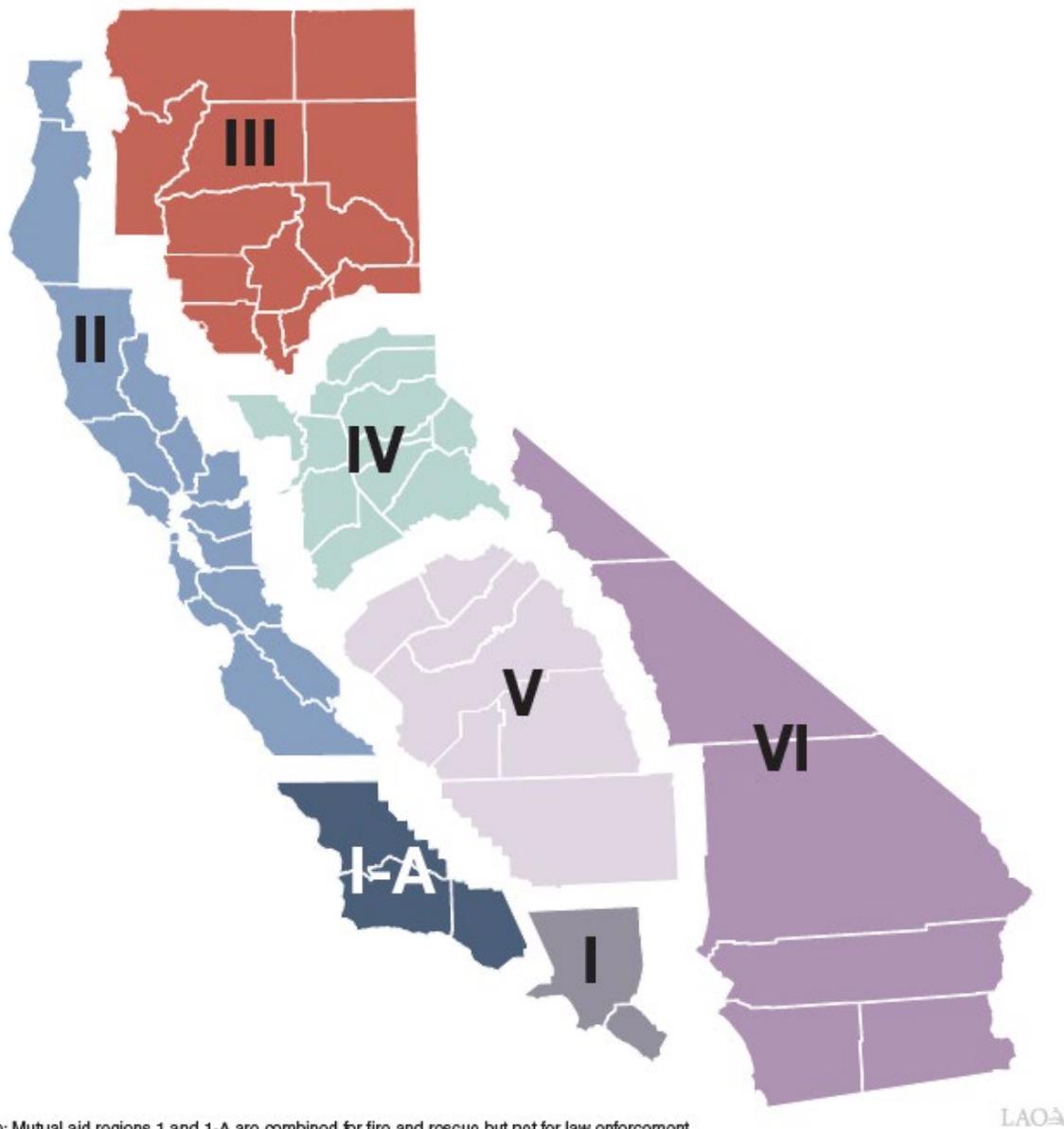


Source: Adapted from the State Emergency Plan, 2017, page 65

The statewide mutual aid system includes several discipline-specific mutual aid systems, such as fire and rescue, law, medical and public works. The adoption of SEMS and NIMS does not alter existing mutual aid systems. These systems work through local government, operational area, regional and state levels consistent with SEMS.

Under the Emergency Services Act, six mutual aid regions (numbered I through VI) have been established within California. As shown in **Figure 10-2**, the County of Ventura is located within Region 1 (Region 1-A for Law Enforcement and Medical Examiner). Region 1 is in the Cal OES Southern Administrative Region.

Figure 10-2. California Mutual Aid Region Map



Note: Mutual aid regions 1 and 1-A are combined for fire and rescue but not for law enforcement.

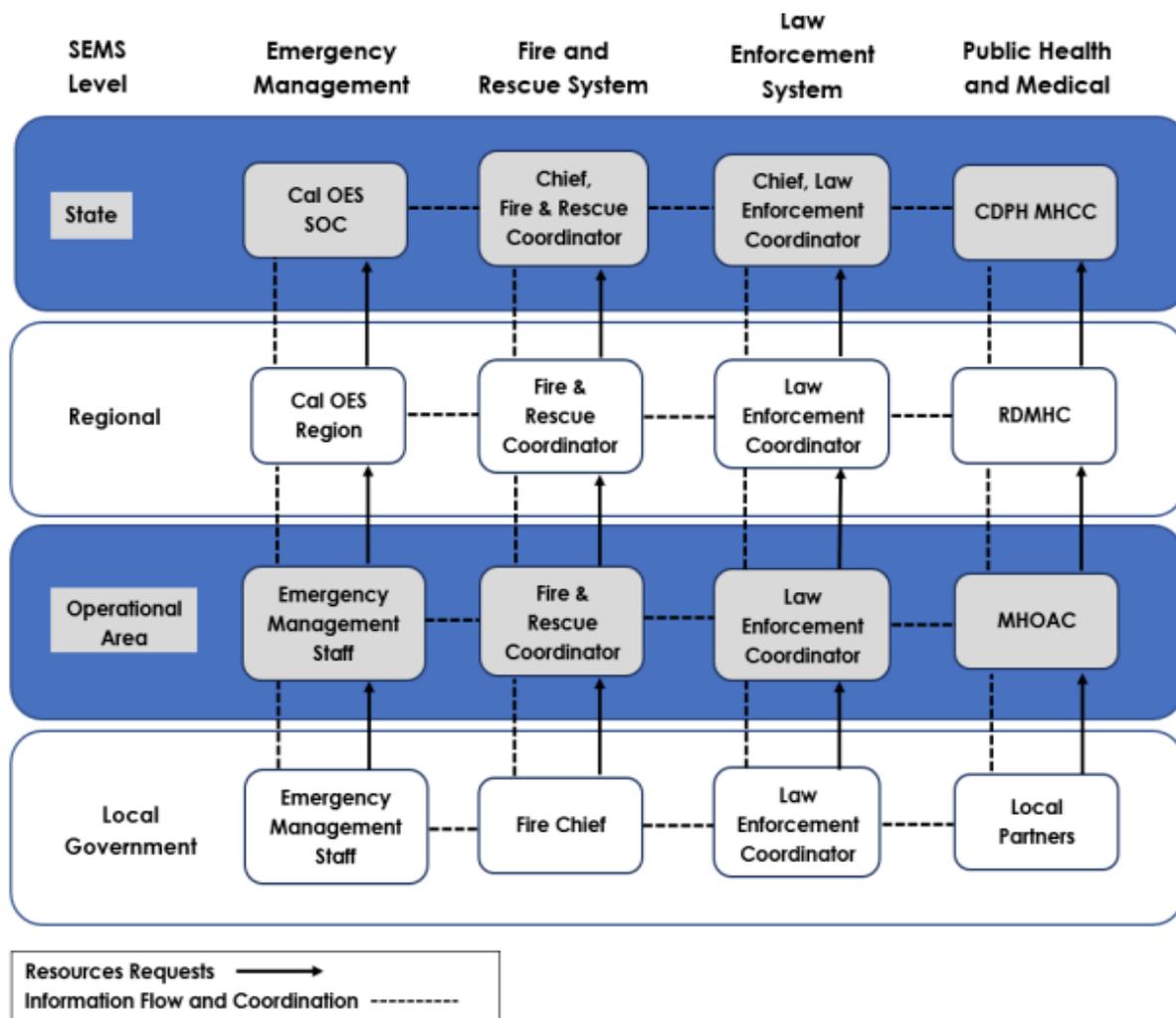
Sources: California Legislative Office, <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3919>. Adapted from the [California State Emergency Plan](#), 2024, page 125.

10.3 MUTUAL AID COORDINATORS

To facilitate mutual aid, discipline-specific mutual aid systems work through designated mutual aid coordinators at the operational area, regional and state levels. The basic role of a mutual aid coordinator is to receive mutual aid requests, coordinate the provision of resources from within the coordinator's geographic area of responsibility and pass on unfilled requests to the next level. Mutual aid coordinators may function from an EOC, their normal departmental location or other locations depending on the circumstances.

Mutual aid requests that do not fall into one of the discipline-specific mutual aid systems are handled through the emergency services mutual aid system by emergency management staff at the local government, operational area, regional and state levels. The flow of resource requests and information among mutual aid coordinators is illustrated in **Figure 10-3**.

Figure 10-3. Discipline-Specific Mutual Aid Systems



Excerpted from the [California State Emergency Plan, 2024](#), page 132

10.4 PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY MUTUAL AID

Volunteer organizations and private businesses may participate in the mutual aid system along with governmental agencies. Volunteer agencies such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Auxiliary Communication Services, Community Emergency Response Teams, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), faith-based organizations and others are an essential element of the statewide emergency response to meet the needs of disaster victims. Volunteer agencies with extensive involvement in the emergency response for the event may be represented in EOCs.

Volunteer agencies mobilize volunteers and other disaster resources through their own systems. However, they may identify resource needs that are not met within their own systems that may be requested through the mutual aid system.

The Ventura County Operational Area EOC has designated a Volunteer Liaison position within the EOC. Additionally, some private agencies have established mutual aid arrangements to assist other private agencies within their functional area. For example, electric and gas utilities have mutual aid agreements within their industry and established procedures for coordinating with governmental EOCs. In some functional areas, services are provided by a mix of special district, municipal and private agencies. Mutual aid arrangements may include both governmental and private agencies.

10.5 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Mutual aid resources will be provided and utilized in accordance with the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement.
- During a proclaimed emergency, inter-jurisdictional mutual aid will be coordinated at the county, operational area, or mutual aid regional level.
- Because different radio frequencies are in use among most agencies, local agencies may provide incoming mutual aid resources with portable radios having local frequencies. Ventura County has established a disaster radio frequency plan following the precepts of ICS/SEMS. Portable radios or re-programming will be made available to incoming mutual-aid resources.
- The County of Ventura will make non-law and non-fire mutual aid requests via the State Emergency Operations Center. Requests should specify, at a minimum:
 - Incident name
 - Order and/or request number
 - Date and time of order
 - Quantity, kind and type of resources needed (include special support needs as appropriate)
 - Reporting location and contact (specific)
 - Requested time of delivery (specific, not simply ASAP)

- Communications systems to be used
- Person/title placing request
- Callback phone number for clarification or additional information
- For State and Federal agencies, a way to reference the originating office's order number

The cities within Ventura County will make non-law and non-fire mutual aid requests through the County EOC or by contacting the Sheriff's Emergency Services Duty Officer.

COUNTY OF VENTURA MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS

- California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN), March 2009.
- State of California, Master Mutual Aid March 11, 1958
- State of California, Emergency Managers October 12, 1993
- Ventura County/Cities, Emergency Building & Safety Services July 11, 1995
- Ventura County/Cities, Public Works July 11, 1995
- Ventura County/Cities, Ventura County Automatic Aid Agreement 1996

11 AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

11.1 GENERAL

The California Emergency Services Act (CESA) (Chapter 7 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code) provides the basic authority for conducting emergency operations following a proclamation of Local Emergency, State of Emergency or State of War Emergency by the Governor and/or appropriate local authorities.

The California State Emergency Plan provides overall statewide authorities and responsibilities and describes the functions and operations of government at all levels during emergencies or disasters. Local emergency plans are considered to be extensions of the California Emergency Plan (see Section 8568 of the CESA).

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was mandated by Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) - 5 and is based on the ICS and the multi-agency coordination systems.

The National Response Framework (NRF) is a guide to how the nation conducts all-hazards incident response. It is based on the premise that incidents are managed at the lowest possible geographic, organizational, and jurisdictional level. It is built upon coordinating flexible, scalable, and adaptable structures to align key roles and responsibilities nationwide, linking all levels of government, private sector businesses and non-governmental organizations.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Regulations (Chapter 1 of Division 2 of Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations) incorporates the use of the ICS, the Master Mutual Aid Agreement and existing mutual aid systems, the Operational Area concept and multi-agency or inter-agency coordination.

11.2 EMERGENCY AUTHORITIES

The following provides emergency authorities for conducting and/or supporting emergency operations:

11.2.1 Federal

- ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA)
- Communications Act of 1934, as amended
- Executive Order 13347 – Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), 2005
- Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986, also known as the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, Title III (42 U.S.C. §§ 11001-11050)
- Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, Public Law 920, as amended
- Federal Communications Commission – Emergency Alert System Rules
- Homeland Security Act, Public Law 107-296, as amended (6 U.S.C. §101-557)
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive #5, February 28, 2003
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive #8, December 17, 2005
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006, Public Law 109-295
- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, Public Law 93-288, as amended
- Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, Public Law 105-19 (42 U.S.C. §§ 14501-14505)

11.2.2 State

- California Government Code, Ch. 7 of Div. 1 of Title 2 - the Emergency Services Act (ESA)
- California Government Codes, §§11135, 8588.15 and 8608
- California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Chapter 6 - California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA),
- California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.5, Sections 25115 and 25117, Chapter 6.95, Sections 2550 et seq., Chapter 7, Sections 25600 through 25610, dealing with hazardous materials

- California Health and Safety Codes, §§101025 and 34070-34082
- California Education Code, §32282
- California Code of Regulations, Title 19 (Public Safety), Division 2 (CAL OES) Emergency and Major Disasters, Subchapter 3, Disaster Services Worker Volunteer Program
- California Code of Regulations, Title 22, §72551 and §87223
- California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Accessibility Regulations
- Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Regulations, Chapter 1 of Division 2 of Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations and Government Code Section 8607(a)
- California Master Mutual Aid Agreement
- Executive Order S-2-05, NIMS Integration into the State of California
- Orders and Regulations Promulgated by the Governor to Take Effect upon the Existence of a State of War Emergency or during a State of Emergency

11.2.3 County

- County of Ventura Resolution No. 236, adopting the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, dated March 11, 1958 (Located in Sheriff's OES)
- County of Ventura Resolution No. 239, establishing policy for emergency actions by Public Works forces, dated January 21, 1969 (Located in Public Works)
- County of Ventura Sandbag Policy, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 10, 1981 (Located in Public Works)
- Ventura County Operational Area Law Enforcement Agencies' Mutual Aid Agreement, August 20, 2014
- Ventura County Operational Area Organization Agreement adopted November 21, 1995. (Located in Sheriff's OES)
- Resolution Adopting the National Incident Management System, R-06, October 4, 2005.
- Ventura County Ordinance No. 4410 pertaining to public emergency adopted February 9, 2009 (Located in Sheriff's OES and Clerk of the Board)

- Ventura County/Cities Mutual Aid Agreement for Emergency Building and Safety Services adopted July 11, 1995

11.3 REFERENCES

11.3.1 Federal

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101: “Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans,” September 2021, Version 3.0
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
- Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Guide, NRT-1 and Plan Review Guide, NRT-1A: (Environmental Protection Agency's National Response Team)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1600
- National Incident Management System (NIMS): U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- National Response Framework: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016
- National Disaster Recovery Framework: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2016
- Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017
- NIMS Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) Compliance Checklist
- U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security: Local and Tribal NIMS Integration

11.3.2 State

- California State Emergency Plan, 2024
- California Fire and Rescue Operations Plan
- California Hazardous Materials Incident Contingency Plan
- California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan
- California (Cal OES) Implementation Guidelines for the National Incident Management System (NIMS), 2006
- California (Cal OES) Emergency Planning Guidance for Local Government and Crosswalk (Checklist for Reviewing Emergency Plans)
- California (Cal OES) Emergency Plan Review Crosswalk, 2024

- California (Cal OES) Integrating Access and Functional Needs within the Emergency Planning Process, Best Practices for Stakeholder Inclusion, 2020
- California (Cal OES) Planning Best Practices for County Emergency Plans, 2021
- California (Cal OES) SEMS Guidelines, 2022
- Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Guidelines

11.3.3 Local

- Ventura County Manual for Local Emergencies, 2017
- Ventura County Operational Area Alert and Warning Annex, 2025
- Ventura County Operational Area Contingency Plan for Heat/Cold Weather Events, 2025
- Ventura County Operational Area Disaster Damage Assessment Plan, 2014
- Ventura County Operational Area Disaster Debris Management Plan, 2009
- Ventura County Operational Area Disaster Recovery Plan, 2019
- Ventura County Operational Area Mass Casualty Medical Response Plan, 2017
- Ventura County Operational Area Mass Fatality Plan (pending)
- Ventura County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan, 2025
- Ventura County Public Health Emergency Response Plan (ERP), 2024
- Ventura County Public Information Annex Plan, 2017
- Ventura County Tsunami Operational Area Response Guide, 2025
- Ventura County Animal Regulation Department Emergency Operations Plan, 2019
- Ventura County Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2022
- Ventura County Emergency Operations Plan, 2022
- Ventura County 2040 General Plan