

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

*June 19, 2019
10:00am – 12:00pm
Topanga Library
120 N. Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Topanga*

MINUTES

Approved

Approved with changes

Co-Chairs: OEM, Jeanne O'Donnell and TCEP, James Grasso

I. Welcome from Co-chairs

Jeanne O'Donnell, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office-Office of Emergency Management and James Grasso, TCEP

II. Attendee Introductions

See sign in sheet for full list.

III. Mission Statement

The mission of the Topanga Emergency Management Task Force, a partnership of designated public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community organizations is to ensure the sustainability of emergency management efforts and strategies for the Los Angeles County unincorporated area of Topanga. The Task Force oversees the coordination and communication among governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community to improve preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery. It will develop, review, and monitor community-based emergency plans, facilitate emergency planning exercises, ensure community involvement and educational outreach, and evaluate and update emergency plans after a disaster.

IV. Public Comments (3 minutes each person)

- Comment from resident Jane Terjung: Retired from a career in the computer field. Mrs. Terjung perceives PSPS as an emergency and is present to obtain information on battery life, broad band internet, and would like to know where the towers are going to be set up. Placement of Tel-Comm companies need to offer back up packages.
- As a concerned citizen who has spent a lot of time becoming familiar with PSPS and our local communication challenges in hopes of helping with mitigating the impact of the blackouts, I created a map that I hope helps to show home locations, SCE Circuits, and how the terrain might come into play when considering portable cell towers during a PSPS: <http://janeterjung.com/DetTopMap.html>

V. Review/Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2019 Meeting

Move to approve minutes Ryan Ulyate and seconded by Fred Agoopi.

VI. De-Energization During Emergencies

- Background and introduction of issues of concern by James Grasso: Topanga Canyon (TC) is one of the last canyons that did not burn in the recent fires. In an emergency TC has many challenges including few ingress and egress routes and a model that predicts that a fire in the northern part of the canyon near Mulholland could reach the ocean in 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The biggest challenge for TC is communication, moving people as soon as possible is vital and having appropriate evacuation and safety information is almost impossible when power failures cause communication systems to fail. For example, during the Woolsey Fire the power was shut down and many people in the canyon were not aware that the TC was under evacuation orders. The goal of this meeting is to figure out ways to solve the communication challenges and clarify plans for providers that will impact this community during Power Safety Power Shutoff PSPS activations and other disasters.

- Comments by Tessa Charnofsky, office of Supervisor Kuehl: We understand that the state, as well as multiple counties, are looking at bigger picture fixes, and that we know we will not have all of the answers today. LA county's Task Force which was convened after the Woolsey Fire, will be releasing recommendations soon, including on notification/communication in disasters (in November).
- Charter/Spectrum (Odenthal): Charter has power back up strategies to keep the system up, but those plans do not include residential power backups for customers. Their capabilities include 12 power supplies in the area and 3-hour battery backup to sustain their systems. Also, Charter reports that they have 60 generators in the immediate area. In an emergency Charter will do everything possible to restore services as soon as possible. Important: in a fire, it is possible that Charter could lose fiber optic cables, which would make backup systems irrelevant. Also, generators would need to be brought into the area and maintained with fuel, which could be an obstacle in fire hazard areas.
- Frontier: Not in attendance
- Southern California Edison (SCE) (Jacobus & Ford): SCE is working arduously to get the most accurate information to partners as soon as possible informing of when, where, and the number of people impacted by PSPS. To do so SCE has invested in a situation awareness center with staff and technology capabilities to conduct weather assessments and modeling and create maps. Weather models and circuit specific monitoring gives SCE the ability to de-energize portions of a circuit, not necessarily the entire circuit. PSPS activations are not solely based on Red Flag conditions, there are working off of sophisticated modelling than accounts for fuel conditions, humidity, wind and other factors that are more precise than Red Flag assessments. SCE has also created maps that can be shared with partners to overlay as needed for each organization so they can evaluate clients and client needs. **Dave Ford will share the link to a website to access the maps for distribution to this group.**
- AT&T (Revetto): AT&T repeaters have batteries with 8-hour life, once expended they could have generators that are deployed to the area, but issues such as fueling and maintaining the generators would have to be addressed. The following information was requested from AT&T:
 - Copy of the rules under which they operate their generators.
 - What is the area that they service?
- Verizon (Roman): Verizon recognizes the uniqueness of TC and is working with Edison to improve internal communication protocols. Verizon does not have (macro) cell towers in the area, only repeaters which have very limited back up capability. If the repeaters lose power, generators that are in the local area will be deployed to keep them operational where possible. Also, services are dependent on fiber optic cables which may need to be replaced before services can be restored. Verizon would like collaboration with TEM to explore ways of getting macro cell towers in TC as soon as possible. They have already assessed the area and recommend placing three towers in the area.
- Water District 29 (Rydman): Water District 29 is the water provider for TC and Malibu. Water District 29 has taken the following measures to support their response during an emergency: build their communications, water meters run on batteries that have a 20-year life, deployed generators to their most critical facilities, and acquired additional generators. Upgrades are being planned within the next 5 years and they will notify TEM public hearings are scheduled to discuss the upgrades.
- California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) (Toney): CalOES is coordinating with the electrical companies for uniformity and consistency for notification, mapping and GIS sharing. CalOES is in the critical partner notification chain on PSPS events and shares information widely with counties and others in public safety organizations. CalOES staff is also available to staff at the

EOCs.

- California Office of Emergency Services-Fire (CalOES Fire) (Stone): Representing Region I and they are prepositioned in the area loaded with fire resources. Stone recommended that a public education campaign on PSPS is needed, explaining what PSPS is and how to prepare.
- LA County Fire (Cookus): Explained how LA County Fire responds to fires in TC and spoke to the proposed evacuation drill planned at a date yet to be determined.
- California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) (Stebbins): Clarified many of the concerns of residents and how providers need to be involved in devising solutions. Stebbins clarified the limited regulatory authority held by the CPUC with respect to cellphone providers and contrasted that fact with the reality that 81% of calls to 911 are made on a cellular phone. CPUC also encouraged TEM to further their knowledge about PSPS by arranging for a tour of the Edison EOC to hear and see more about the systems in place.
- Los Angeles County Sherriff Department (LASD) (Seeto): LASD will do everything possible to effect evacuations in areas threatened by fires and use all possible resource to notify and communicate important information with residents. In addition to using mass notification systems LASD currently drives down every street and knocks on every door in their efforts to ensure public safety. Seetoo encouraged greater use and education on simple AM radios. .
- Assembly Member Richard Bloom (Pershing): Recommended that a public education be conducted of KNX radio and other radio channels in which the community can obtain information during emergencies. He pointed out that older and younger residents access information differently and we need to communicate on multiple levels. He also pointed our that in our rush to adopt new technologies we have sometimes left behind systems that could help us reach our audiences more reliably.
- Mountain Receptions Conservative Authority (Young): The organization has resilience fund grant money ranging for awards between \$5 to 50 thousand dollars that may become available in the next fiscal year. Projects need to have a nexus to state open spaces, emergency safety, and resiliency but may be able to bridge some of the gaps discussed at the meeting today. Full language for the grant to be sent out.

VII. Siren Committee – Updates

The Committee has been working on exploring companies, funding, maintenance cost and planning for a siren system for TC. TC Co-Chairs recommended that further discussions be presented at the next meeting due to lack of time.

VIII. LA County – Updates

No updates.

IX. New Business/Announcements

No announcements.

X. Adjournment