

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

When: November 13, 2025, 1-3pm

Where: EOC, 5200 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order/Instructions for participation**
2. **Roll Call (*Emergency Management Council Appointed Members, Districts 1-5*)**
 - 2.1. Districts: 1-present, 2-present, 3-present, 4-vacant, 5-absent
 - 2.2. City of Scotts Valley- present; City of Santa Cruz-present; City of Capitola – absent; City of Watsonville- present; County Office of Education – present; County Sheriff- present; County Fire- present; Santa Cruz Fire – present; CERT –present; CERT Aux.– absent; MRC – present; UCSC – present; Red Cross – present
3. **Changes to the Agenda**
 - 3.1. Addition of public comment following approval of the minutes. Public comment limited to three minutes.
4. **Approval of Minutes (*Attachment A*)**
 - 4.1. Move to approve – Chief Oatey
 - 4.2. Second – Joe Kristy
5. **Public Comment**
 - 5.1. **Becky Steinburner, rural Aptos** – “Watching County progression on BESS, which are hazardous if lithium batteries are used. There is one currently in the permitting process on Minto Rd., in Watsonville. There will be 300 battery storage containers with lithium phosphate batteries prone to fire and toxic emissions. The BESS ordinance is coming to the Board of Supervisors on 11/18. I urge you all to read and weigh in before or during the meeting at 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz. As written, the ordinance is woefully lacking public safety assurances, and this is very concerning. The ordinance is posted at the County’s new BESS website (presents copy for the record)—Please read it; there is only one paragraph related to fire safety; (presents a copy for the record of Solano County’s 11/4 BESS ordinance) Solano utilized a technical advisory group and created excellent ordinance model, which can be googled “Solano BESS

ordinance". If the Santa Cruz County Ordinance is approved as currently written, South Santa Cruz County is in great peril. Evacuation planning, hazardous waste runoff, water supply to fight fire--how will the county address these concerns?"

5.2. **Nina Audino, Stop Lithium Batteries in Santa Cruz County** – "Yesterday at a Pajaro Valley Fire District meeting, a man asked fire experts, 'how will you contain and extinguish a lithium fire?' The response was silence. So, when the fire happens, even if limited to a single container, the resulting plume will go beyond facility boundaries. Working for ten 10 months, and we have received no response from the County. County Office of Education (?) ignored our comments. There have been no presentations from experts, just industry. How's Paulson Road? Where are the calculations on people living in the area? Where is this information? CEC (?) process is rigorous – EIR dedicated to the facility is less rigorous. This is dangerous tech in rural areas, protect these areas and ag land.

6. **Old Business** – EMC Member vacancies

6.1. **Continuing to work to fill D4 vacancies**

7. **New Business**

8. **Informational Reports**

7.1. OR3 – Multi-jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan update, October 2025
Mass Care and Shelter Functional Exercise, November 2025 Tsunami
Tabletop Exercise, 2026 Regional UASI Golden Eagle Exercise

- HMP – The County's first MJHMP funded by federal HMGP grant. Submitted on schedule 10/31/25 for CalOES then FEMA review; next phase is implementation, 5-year life cycle. Will return to EMC when ready for adoption.
- Mass Care and Functional Exercise – Sponsored by BAUASI with a focus on CBO support for shelter operations. Included CERT and other VOAD members.
- Central Fire hosted Tsunami Tabletop exercise
- February 3, 2026 – Golden Eagle Exercise, joint exercise between County, UCSC, and City for a large-scale pre-planned event

7.2. National Weather Service Winter Forecast Presentation

Brian Garcia, Warning Coordination meteorologist

7.3 City of Scotts Valley – Jayson Rutherford

- Not present – no report

7.4 City of Santa Cruz – Robert Oatey/Meredith Albert

- Chief Oatey March 21st Santa Cruz Warriors Public Safety Night, will close down Front St.
- Wharf rebuild will conclude by mid-February
- Looking for alternative locations for LG HQ during construction
- City is focus on OR3 and community partnerships and building up EOC capacity
- Partial activation for current AR Storm, serving as an exercise
- Increasing frequency of TTX exercises and WEA exercises
- Continuing to promote CruzAware registrations, NOAA weather radio uptake
- October Great Shakeout and Race the Wave Events

7.5 City of Capitola – Leo Moreno

- Not present

7.6 City of Watsonville – Tom Avila

- County radio project stalled due to funding
- City received presentation on battery storage facilities, willing to engage with the County on forthcoming ordinance

7.7 County Office of Education – Rishi Lal

- Current focus of education community is school violence
- Working with Lieutenant Baldwin, tabletop planning with Sheriff's
- Developed School Administrator listserv for situational awareness during emergencies
- Looking to get NOAA Weather Radios for rural schools
- Working on finding a new location for active shooter annual TTX – either elementary or middle school

7.8 Santa Cruz County Sheriff – Dee Baldwin

- Finalizing response plan for the Lompico Area with fire specific evacuation response, will include community involvement
- Developing 7-8 staff for EOC bench depth



7.9 County Fire – Sam Filson

- Upstaffing for winter, hand crews available for storm response ops

7.10 Central Fire – Nigel Miller

- Tsunami TTX – emphasized collaboration, identified opportunities to continue dialogue and improve messaging
- Abundance of surf rescue calls as well as several fatalities
- RING radio project – cost prohibitive to some fire districts, discussed alternative radio resources, hoping to stay on the same system and work towards upgrades

9. Non-Governmental Organizations

8.1 CERT Council – Amanda Gullings
No report

8.2 CERT Auxiliary – John Collins

- 2025 activities – 3 Basic Training Classes, PG&E Safety class, Advanced DSW modules
- Supporting Second Harvest Food Bank Food Distribution Site – Traffic Mgmt

8.3 Medical Reserve Corp – Greg Benson

- Looking at sustainable funding for a number of programs including MRC

8.4 Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) – Dan Selling

- Participating in food distribution site

8.5 American Red Cross – Patsy Gasca

8.6 Watsonville Emergency Airlift Command Team (WEACT) – Tom Hail

- Participated in Great Shakeout exercise
- Part of CAL DART – going to get a Starlink terminal in January, will have an exercise and/or TTX on January 25th

8.7 UC Santa Cruz – Stephan Edgar

- Utilized a CruzAlert for the Great Shakeout
- Had first EOC based TTX centered around CZU After Action Report, will lead to a functional exercise second half of 2026



- Partnering with City of Santa Cruz around community engagement
- Working towards NWS StormReady certification
- Looking at Mass Care and Shelter Dynamics – working with Red Cross to verify contents
- Working on a specific response plan for future battery storage facilities – early stages, working group

10. **OR3 Grant Updates**

- 9.1 FY 2022 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) – OPEN, closing 5/30/25
- 9.2 FY 2023 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) – OPEN
- 9.3 FY 2024 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) – Final Scope Pending Approval
- 9.4 FY 2025 State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) – Projects submitted for consideration
- 9.5 FY 23 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) – Closing 6/30/25
- 9.6 FY 24 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) – Approved
- 9.7 California Fire Safe Council – County Coordinator Grant ROUND 2 – Approved, leveraging as match for BRIC / HMGP
- 9.8 FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure & Community Grant – Beginning Scope Development, Environmental permit scope development
- 9.9 NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program – In construction

11. **Announcements** – None.

12. **Adjourn:** At approximately 2:20PM.