



After Action Report

October 26 PSPS

Cupertino Citizens Corps

26 November 2019

Version: v1.0

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Overview

Description:	PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff Cupertino Event
Event Type:	City of Cupertino Activation
Event Name	October PSPS
Activation No:	CUP-19-200
Managing Entity:	Cupertino Office of Emergency Services
Event Date:	26-Oct-2019
Report Date:	28-Oct-2019
Report Revision:	1.0, REVIEW
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Requirements for Reporting¹

Completing an After-Action Report is part of the required California SEMS reporting process. The Emergency Services Act, Section 8607 (f) mandates that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) in cooperation with involved state and local agencies complete an After-Action Report within 120 days after each declared disaster. Section 2450 (a) of the SEMS Regulations states that, "Any city, city and county, or county declaring a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, and any state agency responding to that emergency shall complete and transmit an after-action report to OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident period as specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, s2900(q)."

Terms

- AAR²:** After Action Report; a document intended to capture observations of an exercise and make recommendations for post-exercise improvements. The final AAR and Improvement Plan (IP) are printed and distributed jointly as a single AAR/IP following an exercise.
- AAR/IP:** Improvement Plan; identifies specific corrective actions, assigns them to responsible parties, and establishes targets for their completion.
- AFN:** Access and Functional Needs; refers to individuals who are or have: physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities; chronic conditions or injuries; limited English proficiency.
- ARP:** Alternate Response Plan; a set of CARES-owned equipment and plans for using it when Comm 469 is not available or insufficient.
- Block Leaders:** The Block Leader Program teaches residents how to get to know neighbors and organize activities so neighbors can more easily communicate. Block leaders receive updates on neighborhood development and activities and are vital links between City Hall and the neighborhoods.
- CAL FIRE:** The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is an emergency response and resource protection department. CAL FIRE protects lives, property and natural resources from fire; responds to emergencies of all types, and protects and

¹ <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/cal-oes-divisions/planning-preparedness/after-action-corrective-action-reporting;>
<http://temp.caloes.ca.gov/PlanningPreparednessSite/Documents/01%202450.pdf>

² <https://training.fema.gov/programs/emischool/el361toolkit/glossary.htm>

- preserves timberlands, wildlands, and urban forests.
- CAP: Corrective Action Plan; FEMA; HSEEP³: actions identified during activations or exercises that are tracked to completion, ensuring that exercises yield tangible preparedness improvements.
- CARES: Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service; ARES®/RACES organization supporting the City of Cupertino.
- CCC: Cupertino Citizen Corps; the City's umbrella organization for CARES, CERT, and MRC.
- CERT: Community Emergency Response Team; trained members who can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.
- Comm 469: City of Cupertino Public Safety Communications Vehicle #469.
- CPAP: Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machine; a machine that increases the air pressure in your throat to prevent your airway from collapsing when you inhale.
- CPUC: California Public Utilities Commission
- CuSD: Cupertino Sanitary District; a CARES Served Agency.
- DOC: Department Operations Center; manages the overall field CCC deployment; aggregates data to be passed to the EOC. Advices EOC Staff on CCC capabilities, readiness, and activities.
- DPW: Department of Public Works; a function within the City with responsible for physical assets throughout the city.
- EOC: Emergency Operations Center
- GIS: Geographic Information System.
- IC: Incident Commander, the person responsible for all aspects of an emergency response at an ICP.
- ICP: Incident Command Post; the physical location of the tactical-level, on-scene incident command and management organization.
- H&W: Health & Welfare; used within the context of a Health & Welfare Check. Usually check of field teams to sure they are OK.
- Medical Baseline: PG&E's Medical Baseline Program, also known as Medical Baseline Allowance, is an assistance program for residential customers who have special energy needs due to qualifying medical conditions. The program includes two different kinds of help: (i) lower rate on your monthly energy bill, and (ii) extra notifications in advance of a Public Safety Power Shutoff.
- MRC: Medical Reserve Corps; a network of community-based units established by local organizations to meet the public health needs of their communities.
- MVA: Monta Vista ARK; the location of the event ICP
- NCO/NCS: Net Control Operator / Net Control Station; the control function that ensures the efficient passing of messages between stations on the frequency.
- NWS: National Weather Service, an organization within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

³ https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1914-25045-8890/hseep_apr13_.pdf

- OES: Office of Emergency Services.
- PSPS: Public Safety Power Shutoff; see description in the Summary.
- SCC: Santa Clara County; used in reference to County RACES
- SJWC: San Jose Water Company; a CARES Served Agency.
- Served Agency: An agency, special district, City critical service provider, or other recognized organization with which CARES has a signed Memorandum of Understanding to assist in time of need.
- WUI: Wildland Urban Interface.

Background and Timeline

Introduction

The purpose of an After-Action Report (AAR) is to analyze the management and/or response to an incident, exercise or event by identifying the strengths to be maintained and built upon, as well as the potential areas for improvement.

The focus of this AAR is on the Cupertino Citizen Corps' (CCC) response to the October PSPS event and is submitted to Cupertino OES by Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES) on behalf of Cupertino Citizens Corps as a record of our findings, planned follow-up activities, and recommendations to the City.

Summary

Wildfires are more destructive and deadlier than in the past, and the threat of wildfires is more prevalent throughout California and calendar year. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) works with Cal Fire and the California Office of Emergency Services to reduce the risk of utility infrastructure starting wildfires, strengthen utility preparedness for emergencies, and to improve utility services during and after emergencies.

The State's investor-owned electric utilities, notably Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison, and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), may shut off electric power, referred to as "de-energization" or Public Safety Power Shut-offs (PSPS), to protect public safety under California law, specifically California Public Utilities Code (PU Code) Sections 451 and 399.2(a)⁴ PG&E delivers power to more than 16 million people throughout Northern California including the City of Cupertino.

On 24-October-2019, PG&E initiated a PSPS event that impacted 88 Cupertino addresses and 160 unincorporated addresses within Cupertino's sphere of influence. The City developed a plan to contact its impacted addresses, activated its EOC to Level 3 (Monitor), and requested Citizen Corps activation to contact these specific addresses. The city EOC's primary objectives were:

1. Public outreach to affected residents and community
2. Personal contact with affected residents; leave flyers
3. Establish personal electronics charging stations at City facilities
4. Monitor the situation; participate in County conference calls

Cupertino Citizens Corps was requested to activate and took the lead at managing the field response to address Objectives #1 and #2 by establishing an ICP at Regnart ARK. The city's GIS department

⁴ [De-Energization \(PSPS\)](#), California Public Utilities Commission

developed and delivered the addresses of the planned outage area and supported the Collector application. The Office of the PIO developed the information to be handed out.

The DOC defined the operational period, developed the Action Plan and executed per the standard operating procedure. The mission for the ICP was to (i) contact all impacted addresses to ensure they were aware of the pending power outage and (ii) inform them of what the City has put in place to support them. All this was to be on a best effort basis.

Event characteristics:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Addresses total: | 240 |
| a. Cupertino | 88 |
| b. Unincorporated | 152 |
| 2. Total canvasser hours: | 104 hours |
| 3. Days activated: | 1 days |

Key Findings

Following the October PSPS event, Cupertino Citizen Corps performed an after-action review of our preparation for and immediate response to the PSPS event specifically related to the ICP field operations and experience. Additional elements of community readiness were also discovered and are covered here for completeness. The lessons learned from this review will drive specific improvements within key areas of the CCC response operations. Results and Recommendations will be shared with the city on areas uncovered during this activation.

The specific findings from this PSPS are:

1. **(Process) Practice makes perfect.** CCC successfully deployed several processes and procedures that have been well practiced during exercises and public service events. Our ability to focus on specific activities relevant to a live activation, then critique and incrementally improve them paid off.

This event was not without lessons learned. See the *Observations and Recommendations* section below and the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) report for where additional improvement investments should be made.

2. **CCC Resource Availability.** CCC resource turn-out was adequate to accomplish the assignment during the operational period of 0800-1200 hours.
3. **Community Readiness.** Canvassers made face to face contact with 46 (19%) of the targeted addresses. The general awareness was pretty good and the unincorporated addresses seemed to be better prepared to withstand prolonged power outage. We did have one resident that should have a follow up by the Sheriff due to their medical condition. This event was reported back to the EOC.

Response Resources

CCC was activated under requested activation number CUP-19-200. Insurance for volunteers was provided by the City of Cupertino, because this was not a DSWVP activation. CCC was tasked with the following OES objective:

1. Develop and implement a plan to personally contact the 240 specific addresses in the affected area.

Event resources came from the following organizations:

1. **Emergency Operations Center.** E.O.C gives the Citizen Corps the authorization to activate and defines the scope of the field operations
2. **Department Operations Center.** D.O.C. will Integrate Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Services (CARES), Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) into one response organization
3. **Cupertino ARES/RACES.** CARES is a volunteer organization of FCC-licensed amateur radio operators who will respond to requests from the city during times of emergencies. Their focus is on understanding risks facing the city and putting plans, communications processes, and tools in place to respond to these risks. Fifteen (15) CARES members participated during operational period.
4. **Cupertino CERT.** CERT is a volunteer organization of residents that want to assist the community during and after an activation. (14) CERT participated in the community outreach to the effected residents and businesses.
5. **Block Leaders.** Are resident volunteers bringing neighbors together on common issues and look out for each other. Block leaders take extra steps to connect neighbors and build community -- helping our neighborhoods to be safer, healthier, and happier. During this neighborhood activation, their (3 Block Leaders) local knowledge was invaluable in developing team plans to accomplish the task.
6. **Cupertino City Staff.** The city management allowed its employees to participate in the field operations. Staff participated in the community outreach, Collector application, flyer development, and logistics.

CCC established an ICP at Regnart ARK, located on the Regnart Elementary School campus. ICP staffing was put in place with the emphasis on resource management, team assignments and tracking, and field communications.

The PSPS event was anticipated based on public and agency communications about the state of the weather.

Timeline

The following timeline is a compilation from ICS-214s submitted as part of this event.

Time	Description, Notes, Comments
Thursday 24-Oct	Cupertino notified of affected addresses of the PSPS, EOC requested activation of Citizen Corps for Saturday 26 flyer distribution to these addresses
Friday 25-Oct, 10:30	Citizen Corps leadership conference call to develop the scope for activation number CUP-19-200, AlertSCC conference calling was utilized to facilitate the call, participants Ken E., Jim O., Bill M., Katy N.
Friday 25-Oct, 12:00	Citizen Corps leadership team met to create the Incident Action Plan, , participants Ken E., Jim O., Bill M., Katy N., Al B., Adam A.
Friday 25-Oct 17:47	AlertSCC Citizen Corps activation message sent to 1026 Citizen Corps members using the polling feature, text, email

Time	Description, Notes, Comments
Friday 25-Oct, 19:00	City supplied the maps, addresses, flyers to Citizen Corps for the planning team to create the teams and materials needed to send teams to the 240 addresses
Saturday 8-Oct, 08:00	Regnart ARK activated to Level 1.
08:30	CARES resource net opened up at 08:30 TAC 3 ₇
09:00	Briefing given by IC, reviewing scope, area, tasks, communication, safety
09:15	Nine Field teams assignments given, communications plans established, teams began assignments, Net Control established
12:15	Last field team returns to Command Post
12:20	Demob started
12:30	Command Post closed and documentation collected for AAR

Observations and Recommendations

Resource Management

Observation #1

ARK Readiness for field command post worked fairly well.

Following the Citizen Corps ARK requested activation process to Level 1 our leadership planning meeting which produced the Incident Action Plan (IAP) worked well. Command post staffing and planning was completed and prepped for field operations on Saturday. Logistic support was able to stage the ARK for operations on Saturday. There were some issues finding certain supplies

Recommendations:

Citizen Corps

1. ARK supplies need to be easier to find.

Observation #2

The Citizen Corps and Block Leader notification process worked better this activation.

During the planning process, a plan was developed to notify the Citizen Corps and the Block Leaders. The plan was to use AlertSCC to notify and poll the Citizen Corps for their availability. Three Block Leaders in the affected area were identified and OES attempted to contact them. The objective was to get as many Block Leaders that know the neighborhood to share their local knowledge.

Recommendations:

City Manager's Office

2. The Block Leader Coordinator should work with Cupertino OES to enhance the role of block leaders to include an emergency response component. Define and strengthen the linkage with OES so better resource utilization could be achieved when the city is activated.

Field Communications

Observation #3

Communication plan utilized CARES deployed with each field team coordinated from the command post.

Nine field teams were deployed to the west side of Cupertino and into unincorporated areas which caused some issues.

Recommendations:

CARES

3. Some unincorporated areas were out of communication and a cross band repeater should be deployed to support these canyon areas

Command Post Operations

Observation #4

The command post was located at the Regnart ARK on Saturday a sunny morning.

Regnart ARK is one of the six ARKs with Citizen Corps supplies which made the command post operations just as we have practiced. There were some site issues we need to better plan for, such as bathrooms, wifi, and shade.

Recommendations:

CERT

4. We should better plan bathroom access at the school sites for preplanned activations.

Policies, Processes and Tools

Observation #5

The tools needed for our field operation were a bit problematic but some “adapt, improvise, and overcome” effort by the command staff made it all work.

The collector application is still new and integrated into Citizen Corps operations which created teams using two methods of recording their progress and the end reporting of collector needs to be addressed. Application instructions were supplied for Apple and Android.

Maps to assist the file and command post ended up not being used

Citizen Corps process for this event were a “modified” process to be able to get the objectives done with a reduces command staff

Recommendations:

City GIS

5. Review the Collector applications and the report function to assist with the command post documentation process
6. Maps for the field operation development need to use our existing maps or come up with something that is more readable available.

Observation #6

This was the second activation for field teams to go to west Cupertino and the first time to go into unincorporated Santa Clara County (sphere of influence).

The goal was to be sure that these specific addresses were aware of the PSPS event that was coming. PG&E provided the addresses to the City.

In short, given the same time constraints as this PSPS event, contacting every Cupertino resident with a “knock-on-the-door” will not scale due to insufficient time or resources.

Given that this PSPS as well as other events have a preparedness message that everyone needs to know and know how to access to critical information

Recommendations:

City

7. Investigate options for expeditious delivery of PSPS-like public safety information, such as a USPS EDDM⁵ solution.
8. Determine the necessity and requirements for a personal contact vs. a successful “drop (the flyer) and go” approach. Success implies that residents have a previous understanding of the general risks that we all regularly face (PSPS, earthquakes, dam breaks, etc.), and understand the information delivered on “door hangers”.
9. Plan to augment the efforts of CCC with block leaders. One purpose of the city’s Block Leader program is to ensure communications and mutual assistance within neighborhoods during emergencies. The PSPS is a perfect example of a situation where this program would be useful.
10. Leverage the PSPS experience to encourage more neighborhoods in the city to join the Block Leader program.
11. Community Emergency Preparedness education needs to be in place to make sure everyone with-in Cupertino’s “sphere of influence” has access to the information and resources they need to be safe.

Community Preparedness, Health, and Safety

Observation #7

Citizen Corps, Block Leaders, City Staff and community volunteers need to be safe at the site and in their field assignments.

Field crews should all have identification badges and vests for all field deployments.

Recommendations:

Citizen Corps

12. Review process for deploying field crews
13. Make sure required equipment is available in all ARK supplies

⁵ <https://www.usps.com/business/every-door-direct-mail.htm>, USPS EDDM (Every Door Direct Mail, 18.7 Cents each)

Conclusion

Wildland fires have become common in Northern California over the last several years. Years of drought have contributed to huge areas of forest land being littered with dying or dead trees. Weather patterns are changing and show larger seasonal swings than those to which we have been accustomed.

As a result, the area considered by state officials to be at high risk of wildfire within PG&E's service area has grown from 15% in 2012 to more than 50% today⁶.

The 8th and 26th of October 2019 PSPS events are likely to be the first of many such power shutoffs to affect Northern California during the next 10 years, Cupertino included. From a wildland fire perspective, the Oct26 PSPS event allowed PG&E to further refine its PSPS process with the goal of fewer wildland fires, smaller power outage areas, improvements to its infrastructure, and greater safety for Northern California residences. While this is good news for the state long term, it is not much comfort to those who were impacted by these recent PSPS events.

The City of Cupertino does not own the power shutoff problem or the lack of its residents' preparedness. However, the city can effectively manage the problem through its emergency plans, educational outreach, and response coordination. This requires clear and shared plans with public safety agencies, community volunteers, and city residents.

We will have other PSPS events, just as surely as there will be an earthquake in our future.

⁶ http://www.pgecurrents.com/2019/10/17/pge-ceo-we-hear-the-anger-are-working-hard-to-avoid-power-shut-offs/?cid=em_ResNL_20191007-REE-ResEE-ResNewsletter_20191019_article1_email_na_na, Bill Johnson, CEO, PG&E