

Monte Sereno Evacuation Drill



monte sereno



Santa Fe, New Mexico
Amateur Radio Emergency Service



After-Action Report (AAR)

City of Santa Fe

September 13, 2014

Contents

CONTENTS - 2
ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS - 3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - 4
SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW - 5
SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY - 7
SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES - 9
SECTION 4: CONCLUSION - 12
APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 13
APPENDIX B: BY THE NUMBERS – 15
APPENDIX C: EVACUEE SURVEYS - 16

ADMINISTRATIVE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

1. The title of this document is *Monte Sereno Evacuation Drill After Action Report*.
2. Point of Contact:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management conducted a drill to test the City's reverse notification system and procedures for conducting an evacuation of a neighborhood. The primary objective of the exercise was to notify one hundred percent of homes within a designated evacuation area of an evacuation and establish an evacuation site within 90 minutes of the decision to evacuate.

The exercise was developed through input from a planning team composed Santa Fe Fire Department, Santa Fe Police Department, Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management, Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC), Santa Fe Amateur Emergency Service (SFARES) and Monte Sereno Fire Prevention Committee representatives. The Office of Emergency Management would like to thank David Gurule from the Las Estrellas community for use of their lot during the exercise.

The purpose of this report is to analyze exercise results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Major Strengths

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as follows:

- Redundant notification systems reached all “in-play” homes in the notification area.
- Positive participation and engagement leading up to the drill by the Monte Sereno community
- Common Operating Picture established and maintained by incident command
- Maintenance of accountability for field personnel and evacuees

Primary Areas for Improvement

Throughout the exercise, several opportunities for improvement in the City of Santa Fe's ability to manage emergency response and recovery operations were identified. The primary areas for improvement, including recommendations, are as follows:

- No uniform mechanism for identifying homes that have been contacted
- Caller ID display from reverse notification system caused confusion
- Long reverse notification voice message led to too many text messages

Overall, this exercise successfully addressed the goals and objectives identified by the exercise planning team. Future exercises will evaluate the efficacy reverse notifications to a larger area with less notice for the RECC and response partners.

SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

Exercise Details

Exercise Name

Monte Sereno Evacuation Drill

Type of Exercise

Drill

Exercise Start Date

09/10/14

Exercise End Date

09/13/14

Duration

3 Hours

Monte Sereno Community and Evacuation Site (North Ridgetop Road/Avenida Rincon)

Sponsor

Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management

Participating Agencies and Organizations

- Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management
- Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center
- Santa Fe Fire Department
- Santa Fe Police Department
- Santa Fe Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- American Red Cross
- Monte Sereno Fire Prevention Committee

Mission

Response

Capabilities

Public Information and Warning
Operational Coordination
Operational Communication

Scenario Type

This exercise focused on the City of Santa Fe's notification and evacuation of a neighborhood during a wildfire.

Exercise Objectives

The Exercise Planning Team selected objectives that focus on evaluating emergency response and notification procedures, readily identify areas for improvement, and facilitate a collaborative environment. This exercise will focus on the following objectives:

- 1. Public Information and Warning:** Evaluate the City and Regional Emergency Communications Center's ability to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.
- 2. Operational Coordination:** Evaluate the City of Santa Fe's ability to establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.
- 3. Operational Communication:** Evaluate the City of Santa Fe's ability to ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of the security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.

Number of Participants:

- Players: 37
- Controllers/Evaluators: 6

SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

Exercise Purpose and Design

This exercise was designed to evaluate the City of Santa Fe's ability to provide timely and accurate public information and warning to a specific geographic area during a simulated wildfire directing residents to evacuate. This exercise was also intended to evaluate the City's ability to establish an evacuation site, maintain a unified command, and conduct inter-agency communications.

Exercise Objectives, Capabilities, and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items that were derived from the Core Capabilities List. The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise.

Scenario Summary

The following message was sent to residents in the evacuation zone on September 10th, 2014 at 3:00pm to begin the exercise:

"This is an EXERCISE TEST message from the Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center for the Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management. This is only an exercise for the Monte Sereno Community, NOT an actual emergency... Due to a wildfire burning near Tesuque Pueblo, the Monte Sereno community has been placed on a Pre-Evacuation notice. Evacuation is not necessary at this time, however, residents are encouraged to prepare their emergency supplies and go-kit in case evacuation becomes necessary. An evacuation center will be established in the event of evacuations at the dirt parking lot near Thornburg at Ridgetop Road and Avenida Rincon. Please contact the Office of Emergency Management at 955-6537 if you have any questions or may require additional assistance during an evacuation. This has been an EXERCISE TEST message from the Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management and is NOT an actual emergency. Thank you."

The following message was sent to residents in the evacuation zone on September 13^h, 2014 at 9:00am to begin the evacuation portion of the exercise:

"This is an EXERCISE TEST message from the Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center for the Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management. This is only an exercise for the Monte

Sereno Community, NOT an actual emergency... Due to a rapid progression of the Tesuque Wildfire, the City of Santa Fe is recommending residents of the Monte Sereno community evacuate immediately to the evacuation site near Thornburg at Ridgetop Road and Avenida Rincon. Please utilize San Juan Ranch and Tano Roads to evacuate; Opera Drive and Highway 84/285 is inaccessible due to the wildfire threat. Please remain calm during the evacuation, follow instructions of fire and police personnel operating in your neighborhood, and bring your emergency evacuation supplies/go-kit with you. If you need assistance with evacuating, please contact the Regional Emergency Communications Center at 428-3710. Again, please remain calm, obey all traffic signals and speed limits, follow directions from fire and police personnel, and evacuate immediately. Additional information is available at the City of Santa Fe website (www.santafenm.gov) and click the “Emergencies” tab at the top of the website. This has been an EXERCISE TEST message from the Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management and is NOT an actual emergency. Thank you.”

In addition to voice and text messages, door-to-door notifications were provided by the Santa Fe Police and Fire Departments.

SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities, and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of the Monte Sereno Evacuation Drill are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations, which include references, analysis, and recommendations.

CAPABILITY 1: Public Information and Warning

Summary: This capability refers to the ability to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard, as well as the actions being taken and the assistance being made available, as appropriate.

Activity 1.1: Provide Timely and Accurate Pre-Evacuation and Evacuation messaging to a specific geographic area

Observation 1.1.1: The City of Santa Fe, in coordination with the Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center, provided warning and exercise-related information via text messages, email, telephone calls, door-to-door notifications, the Nixle public alert system, social media, and the City's website.

Analysis: Door-to-door notifications reached 100% of the homes in the exercise area that had not been designated "out of play" by the Monte Sereno Fire Prevention Committee, and 93% of the phone numbers/emails registered received calls/text messages/email via the reverse notifications system during the evacuation notification. Text messages, particularly the pre-evacuation notice text messages, were very lengthy and were received by some out of their intended order, which caused difficulty in fully understanding the message. Some evacuees reported that the caller identification on their cell phones showed the reverse notification call was from a local hotel and spa, La Posada. Door-to-door notifications were tracked via communications from field personnel to the Incident Command Post (ICP); however, there was no system for field personnel to identify which homes had been evacuated without contacting the ICP.

Recommendations:

- The City of Santa Fe should continue to work with residents and leverage neighborhood organizations and homeowner associations to increase the volume of self-registration to the RECC reverse notification portal.
- The RECC should conduct monthly tests of the reverse notification system to ensure RECC staff is familiar with the system and activation procedures. Regular tests targeting specific areas of the city will also increase visibility of the system and may encourage additional self-registrations.

- Program the reverse notification system to provide a number to the RECC as a caller identification number, which will avoid confusion as to the origin of the call and provide a more convenient option for evacuees to return the notification call if they need additional information or assistance.
- Separate text messages should be drafted for dissemination through the reverse notification system, especially if the voice/email message is lengthy. Text messages should be as concise as possible and limited to 480 characters/spaces (3 SMS text messages) when possible.

CAPABILITY 2: Operational Coordination

Summary: This capability refers to the ability to establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.

Activity 2.1: Establish a unified command and provide and maintain a common operating picture

Observation 2.1.1: Unified command was established with representatives from the Santa Fe Fire and Police Departments. A common operating picture was established and maintained through public safety radio communications, face-to-face briefings, and communications relays by the SFARES.

Analysis: The inter-agency dynamics of this drill created the potential for competing priorities, a lack of united effort, and an unclear assessment of the current situation. However, a clearly established set of goals and objectives established by the unified command, clear direction to operations personnel, and the establishment of a system to track field operations and document contact (or simulated contact) with each home within the evacuation area circumvented those potential pitfalls to a successful unified command and common operating picture. SFARES provided situational awareness from the field, delivering reports on traffic flows and volume, traffic bottlenecks, and any issues motorists were having during the evacuation.

Recommendations:

- The City of Santa Fe should continue training command staff in all agencies and departments in use of the Incident Command System.
- The City of Santa Fe should continue utilizing established incident documentation procedures, including Incident Action Plans, to support operational continuity, planning, and after-action assessment of incident operations.
- The City of Santa Fe should continue to integrate SFARES into exercises and real-world incidents to assist with the provision of situational awareness.

CAPABILITY 3: Operational Communication

Summary: This capability refers to the ability to ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of the security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and all response forces.

Activity 3.1: Provide Incident Command/First Responder/Interoperable Communications

Observation 3.1.1: Tactical communications via public safety radios and face-to-face interaction, augmented by communications relays by SFARES, worked very well, with no missed messages, dead spots, or other issues reported.

Analysis: Field personnel were coordinating operations via the designated Fire/PD tactical channel, which was monitored at the RECC on a portable radio. SFARES was also able to communicate with the ICP and provide situational awareness updates as needed. Additionally, SFARES was able to check all possible communication links in the area. The following communications links were excellent (Tesuque, simplex on 147.555 MHz), SFARES EM (147.02), and the 440 link on 442.825). Neither La Madera nor Pajarito Mtn were acceptable. Finally, the W5SF UHF repeater on 444.475 was excellent and would allow low speed digital communications (1200).

Recommendations:

- The City of Santa Fe should continue to utilize the Fire/PD tactical channel for inter-agency response coordination.
- The City of Santa Fe should continue to integrate SFARES into exercises and real-world incidents to assist with redundant communications.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The City of Santa Fe had never conducted an evacuation of an entire neighborhood, either as an exercise or due to a real-world emergency or disaster. Although plans exist to facilitate such an evacuation, they had never been implemented. This exercise provided the City with an opportunity to validate the City's plans to conduct a neighborhood-wide evacuation and ensure the City's capability to initiate, conduct, and support a neighborhood evacuation during an emergency.

The establishment of goals, objectives, and metrics to evaluate the this exercise allowed the Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management to both qualitatively and quantitatively determine the successes achieved during the conduct of this drill and those areas that need to be improved upon. These have been documented in this report and the improvement plan provides accountability to ensure any needed improvements are completed.

The collaborative efforts of the City of Santa Fe Fire and Police Departments, the support of the American Red Cross and Santa Fe Amateur Radio Service, and the participation of the Monte Sereno community and their Fire Prevention Committee leadership made this exercise a success, and one that will serve as a model for future evacuation exercises.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

THIS IMPROVEMENT PLAN HAS BEEN DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR THE CITY OF Santa Fe as a result of the Monte Sereno Evacuation Drill conducted on September 10-13, 2014. These recommendations draw on both the After Action Report and the After Action Conference. Corrective Actions are described as one of the following Capability Elements: Planning, Organizing, Exercise, Training, and Equipment.

Capability	Observation Title	Recommendation	Corrective Action Description	Capability Element	Primary Responsible Agency	Agency POC	Start Date	Complete Date
Public Information and Warning	Observation 1.1.1	The RECC should conduct monthly tests of the reverse notification system to ensure RECC staff is familiar with the system and activation procedures. Regular tests targeting specific areas of the city will also increase visibility of the system and may encourage additional self-registrations.	Conduct monthly tests of the reverse notification system, which will be publicized in advance by the Santa Fe OEM and RECC, to familiarize RECC staff with the reverse notifications procedures.	Training	RECC	K. Martinez	November 1, 2014	On-going
		Program the reverse notification system to provide a number to the RECC as a caller identification number, which will avoid confusion as to the origin of the call and	Ensure that outgoing calls and text messages from the reverse notification system display the RECC	Equipment	RECC	K. Martinez	September 15, 2015	September 15, 2015 COMPLETED

		provide a more convenient option for evacuees to return the notification call if they need additional information or assistance.	phone number on the recipient's caller identification.					
		Separate text messages should be drafted for dissemination through the reverse notification system, especially if the voice/email message is lengthy. Text messages should be as concise as possible and limited to 480 characters/spaces (3 SMS text messages) when possible.	Santa Fe OEM will draft Warning and Emergency Public Information procedures for every method of message dissemination and include a provision that a separate 480 character (or less) message should be drafted for reverse notification messages.	Planning	SF OEM	A. Phelps	October 1, 2014	November 30, 2014

APPENDIX B: BY THE NUMBERS

Participants:

Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management	1
Santa Fe Police Department	5
Santa Fe Fire Department	5
Santa Fe Regional Emergency Communications Center	2
Santa Fe Amateur Radio Emergency Services	8
American Red Cross	2
Monte Sereno Community	20
TOTAL	43

Evacuation times:

Vehicle #	Time	Differential	# of Occupants	# of Pets
1	0907	+5 min	1	0
2	0912	+12 min	2	0
3	0914	+14 min	2	0
4	0916	+16 min	1	2
5	0916	+16 min	1	0
6	0916	+16 min	2	0
7	0919	+19 min	2	0
8	0919	+19 min	1	0
9	0932	+32 min	1	0
10	0935	+35 min	1	2
11	0934	+34 min	1	0
12	0942	+42 min	1	0
13	1013	+73 min	2	0

Notifications:

Text Messages	30
Emails	34
Voice Messages	80
Error/Fax Tone/ No Answer/Abandoned/Busy	13
Door Knocks	31
TOTAL	188

APPENDIX C: EVACUEE SURVEYS

Survey Results (12 surveys submitted)

1. Are you the Owner-Resident, or a Sitter/Tenant/Housekeeper?
Owner-Resident: 12 Sitter/Tenant/Housekeeper: 0
2. Did you register with the Regional Emergency Communications Center? (the City of Santa Fe's reverse 911 system?) Yes 12 No 0
3. How did you register? Online 9 Email with the RECC 2 Direct phone contact 1

If Yes, did you register your cell phone(s)? Yes 12 No 0
If Yes, did you register your email address? Yes 12 No 0
4. Did you receive the pre-evacuation notice on Wednesday, September 10th through any of the following methods?

Home phone call: 10
Mobile phone call: 8
Text message: 6
Email message: 7
What time approximately did you receive the call/message? Approx 3pm
In English: 6 In Spanish: 0 In both English and Spanish: 2

Did not receive the notice: 0 (1 respondent put a question mark here and did not check any of the above boxes)

Was the pre-evacuation notice clear and informative? Yes: 11 No: 0 N/A: 0

Was the pre-evacuation notice understandable in both languages? Yes: 9 No: 0

If No, what could have improved this message?
 - "The text message was alternate Eng/Spanish and was a bit difficult to read."
 - "Full message in each language rather than interspersed"

(These may be a reference to the "jumbled" order of text messages)
5. Did you receive the evacuation notice on Saturday, September 13th through any of the following methods?

(One respondent noted they received notification via PD visit)

Home phone call: 10

Mobile phone call: 9

Text message: 8

Email message: 6

What time approximately did you receive the call/message? Approx. 9am

In English: 8 In Spanish: 0 In both English and Spanish: 4

Did not receive the notice: 0

Was the evacuation notice clear and informative? Yes: 12 No: 0 N/A: 0

Was the pre-evacuation notice understandable in both languages? Yes: 11 No: 0

If No, what could have improved this message?

- No comments received

6. Did the SF Fire Department or SF Police also come to your door to notify you?

Yes: 5 No: 5 If Yes, which agency? 1- PD; 1- FD

We would like you now to think about what kinds of things are important to you in such a situation, whether it is an exercise or an actual emergency>

7. In preparing for the evacuation, did you follow the list of items in the ***Ready, Set, Go*** pamphlet?

Yes 7 No 5 Or another emergency list? _____

Or, did you make up a personal list? Yes 5 No 5

If Yes, would you like to share your list, or anything on your list?

- No responses

8. Did you bring with you all the things that you had intended to bring? Yes 5 No 6

If No, why did you leave some things behind?

- Papers
- Test Only
- Left cats as have to go to a class from here
- Not for the test, but we are ready for the real thing
- Time today so we decided to bring few things to be able to come

9. Would you like to list anything you wish that you **had** brought?

- Dog
- Ipad
- Nothing in prep- just brought dog
- Warm clothing

or anything that you wish that you **had not** brought?

- No responses

As a result of this drill, do you feel:

More prepared for an emergency or evacuation: 11

As prepared for an emergency or evacuation as I was before the drill: 0

Less prepared for an emergency or evacuation: 0

10. Do you have any other recommendations that you believe could improve similar drills in the future for our community of Monte Sereno, or another community in Santa Fe?

- Call from “La Posada” was disconcerting – almost hung up
- Great job by all. Much appreciated
- Thank you – this is a good thing to do
- Thanks!

Thank you very much for participating in the exercise, and for your cooperation in completing this survey debriefing. We appreciate your support for the Monte Sereno community and the City of Santa Fe.

