

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security**



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PREPAREDNESS

Smart Practices

Spotlight

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Government and Business Team Up for Emergencies El Segundo, California

Summary: El Segundo covers just 5.5 square miles and has a resident population of only about 16,000 people. But El Segundo is close to the Los Angeles International Airport and numerous industries that represent national security interests. And during the week, its population expands to include a workforce of more than 90,000. On September 11, 2001, its EOC was overwhelmed with calls from local businesses and industry.

In the aftermath of the September 11, officials of the City of El Segundo knew they had to do something. When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, emergency managers across the country activated their Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). This scenario posed a big problem for El Segundo, which has limited personnel resources.

The city's EOC was inundated with calls from local business and industry officials – aerospace and military defense contractors, chemical manufacturers, utility companies, an oil refinery and a range of commercial industries. They wanted to know about potential evacuations, possible bomb threats, road and facility closures, the status of major highways, and whether or not their employees could get to work, or leave, without being caught in traffic gridlock.

The solution: A government-business partnership in El Segundo. The city established an official business and industry liaison function in its EOC operating plan with the business community providing personnel to staff the positions. During an emergency, at least two private industry staffers work each 12-hour shift on a rotating basis, working business community-related issues. Staff would collect information from the city's emergency operations and organization and relay it to the business community, as well as share business sector concerns with emergency management. One person handles telephone calls and the other manages e-mail communications with business and industry officials. The two staffers would work side-by-side with the city's emergency workers and familiarize themselves with EOC emergency management practices and procedures. The staffers would be part of the emergency management team and a component of the Planning and intelligence section of the city EOC.

Liaison personnel are provided through a Business and Industry Emergency Response Committee, which meets monthly to address the range of business community/city emergency operations issues. The committee is made up of about 50 representatives of companies located in the area and its members have been trained in emergency management systems. They have also participated in an Emergency Operations Center orientation and operations course conducted by El Segundo's emergency services coordinator.

"Before 9/11, a city employee would handle the incoming calls from industry officials and the staff time associated with this task was significant," said David Burns, El Segundo emergency services coordinator. "There had to be a better way to coordinate the collection and dissemination of information to the business community in an emergency. This process really works for us."

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Smart Practices Spotlight highlights practices and ideas that members of the emergency management and responder community have found useful and effective; they are not necessarily advocated or endorsed by FEMA. For more information about this initiative, contact David Burns, coordinator, El Segundo Emergency Services, at 310-524-2252 or DBurns@elsegundo.org.