

# 2 | PUBLIC SAFETY

## 2.1 | OVERVIEW

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**Emergency management** Over the past twenty years, seven natural-hazard events have resulted in the declaration of federal and state emergencies by the U.S. president and California governor: 1983 landslides, 1985 floods and winter storms, Loma Prieta earthquake (October 17, 1989), East Bay Hills fire (October 20, 1991), 1995 floods and winter storms, El Niño storms of 1997 and La Niña storms of 1998. In addition, the freeze of 1990 constituted a state emergency, but not a federal one. (Declarations of disaster are necessary to activate federal and state assistance programs.) The management of emergencies and disasters consists of three distinct phases: (1) mitigation of potential hazards and pre-event preparedness (and including event forecasting, response planning, training and public education); (2) response during or soon after the event, most often by fire, police and medical-services personnel and trained volunteers (also includes public alerts and notification, evacuation, search and rescue, and critical, short-term assistance to victims); and (3) post-event recovery, which includes debris removal, re-establishment of public and private services, financial and other longer-term types of assistance to victims, reconstruction, and collection and analysis of data related to the event.



**Violent crime** Violent crime, while not a legal classification, is considered to include various types of felonies such as murder, rape, aggravated assault, burglary, robbery and arson. (Less serious crimes are considered misdemeanors, and include simple assault, disorderly conduct, public drunkenness, vandalism and loitering.) Because of the high human and economic price it exerts, violent crime consistently ranks as one of the public’s major concerns—the mere perception of crime can intimidate individuals and undermine whole neighborhoods. Due to a complex mix of social, demographic and economic factors, national rates of violent crime began to increase substantially in the late 1960s, peaked in the early 1990s, and have declined considerably since then. Nevertheless, the United States still has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most—perhaps *the* most—violent and crime-ridden of all industrialized countries.

**Terrorism** Events in the United States over the last decade or so—the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal building and the tragic events of September 11, 2001—have made it clear that the United States is not immune to the dangers of terrorism. An inelegant description of terrorism is violence directed against non-combatants with the goal of spreading fear and anxiety to further social or political objectives. This broad description covers acts committed by domestic and foreign-based individuals and political or religious organizations, and even by sovereign nation states. (Because of the assistance and resources that nation states are capable of providing, some experts consider state-sponsored terrorism to pose the greatest threat to the United States.) Terrorism may involve injury to people or damage to property, and may manifest itself through bombings, highjackings, kidnappings, arson, assassinations, threats only, disruption of “lifeline systems” and other critical infrastructure, and the use of conventional, nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

## 2.2 | INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

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FEMA is a former independent agency that became part of the new U.S. Department of Homeland Security in March 2003.

**Emergency management agencies** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is charged, at the federal level, with helping the country prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the full range of natural and human-caused disasters. FEMA provides financial assistance and other resources to regions declared disaster

areas by the president. The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) performs similar services, on a smaller scale, at the state level. The state’s OES assists local governments in their emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts; serves as the conduit for federal disaster assistance; provides emergency information to the public; and coordinates the statewide mutual aid system. The local equivalent of these two agencies is the Oakland OES, a division of the Oakland Fire Department (OFD). Among its important functions, the Oakland OES serves as the certified unified program agency (CUPA) for the city, enforcing federal, state and local legislation related to hazardous materials (see Chapter 5, “Hazardous Materials”), and operates the city’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC; see the next section, “Analysis”).

Finally, there are several nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and religious, civic and business groups in Oakland that are active in the field of emergency management. Groups worthy of mention include the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, CORE teams (Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies), Alameda CARD (Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters, which provides for the emergency needs of vulnerable and underserved populations in Alameda County), and Oakland Amateur Radio Emergency Services (volunteer organization of licensed amateur radio service operators who support Oakland government officials with communication services during emergency conditions).

**Violent crime** The prevention and management of violent crime is primarily a local responsibility. The U.S. Department of Justice and its state-level equivalent, the California Department of Justice, are charged with enforcing federal and state statutes, respectively, on a wide range of criminal offenses, including public corruption, organized crime, fraud, human trafficking, white-collar crime, domestic violence and discrimination. However, these agencies generally become involved in violent-crime offenses only when they involve multiple jurisdictions or are of a significant enough scale that they exceed the response capabilities of the local law-enforcement agency.

In Oakland, the local law-enforcement agency is the Oakland Police Department (OPD). In addition to several ancillary units reporting directly to the police chief, OPD is organized into three bureaus: services, field operations and investigations. The Bureau of Services is made up primarily of units providing department-wide auxiliary functions such as administration, accounting, communications, personnel, training and records. The Bureau of Field Operations includes divisions handling neighborhood services (including 57 community policing beats), field support (encompassing various

The main pieces of legislation related to emergency management in California are found in Sections 8550-8668 of the California Government Code.

CORE is a program offering free emergency prevention, preparedness and response training to individuals, neighborhood groups and other community organizations. CORE participants learn basic emergency skills and receive hands-on experience in fire suppression, light urban search and rescue, damage assessment and first aid. The program’s goal is to increase self-reliance skills at the individual and neighborhood levels in the event of a major disaster, when the capabilities of official emergency-response personnel might be overwhelmed.



community involvement and outreach functions), special operations (including airport security, animal services and the canine unit) and traffic operations. Finally, the Bureau of Investigations includes organizational sections specializing in homicide, robbery/assault, property crimes (arson, environmental crimes and auto theft), “special victims” (including missing persons and family violence) and narcotics.

**Terrorism** Because of terrorism’s cross-border nature, terrorism prevention is largely a responsibility of the federal government. However, before the events of September 11, 2001, there was no federal agency with homeland security as its primary objective. To remedy this situation, the government established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in early 2003, consolidating 22 separate agencies with relevant responsibilities into the 15<sup>th</sup> cabinet department. (Merged agencies include FEMA, the Coast Guard, the Secret Service, the Transportation Security Administration and the Customs Service.) DHS’s primary objectives are to prevent terrorist attacks in the U.S. and to strengthen the capacity to respond if attacks do occur. To accomplish its mission, DHS works in partnership with other federal agencies with responsibilities related to homeland security—the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Central Intelligence Agency among them—and also with state and local governments. In California, the main agency involved in activities related to terrorism prevention and response is the Governor’s OES, while in Oakland it is the Fire Department’s OES.

The California Environmental Quality Act is found in Sections 21000-21177 of the California Public Resources Code.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** CEQA, a state law, requires public agencies in California to identify the significant environmental effects of their actions (including the approval of development proposals), and to avoid or mitigate such effects, if feasible. The state’s guidelines interpreting CEQA contain a “checklist” with a wide range of environmental impacts that public agencies, including the City of Oakland, should consider in their evaluation of development projects. Considerations related to public safety include the potential for a project to:

- result in inadequate emergency access;
- impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; and
- result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of, or need for, new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for fire protection, police protection or other public services or facilities.

## 2.3 | ANALYSIS

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**Emergency management** As mentioned in the previous section, the Oakland OES operates an emergency operations center (EOC) from which centralized emergency management would be performed during a disaster. In the event of a disaster, EOC staff would manage emergency operations, coordinate operations with other government agencies, prepare situation and operational reports, receive and disseminate warning information, provide emergency instructions to the public, and communicate with the media. The EOC includes an operations area, radio room, kitchen, conference rooms, bathrooms and office areas. It has the capability to house and feed staff for 72 hours, and sufficient fuel reserve for continuous emergency power to last five days. The EOC would be activated after a significant earthquake, uncontrolled fire or dam failure, impending or declared state-of-war emergency, or an emergency situation of such magnitude that it will require a large commitment of resources from two or more city agencies over an extended period of time.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is a framework for standardizing emergency-response procedures in California to facilitate the flow of information and resources among agencies in responding to multi-agency emergencies. Created in response to the Oakland Hills fire of 1991, SEMS sets standard operating procedures, terminology, chains of command, communication protocols and equipment so that various agencies and jurisdictions, even at different levels of government, can act as a single response entity. The City of Oakland has adopted SEMS, and Oakland OES has prepared a SEMS emergency plan describing how city agencies would respond to declared emergencies in the city. The plan covers five functional areas, corresponding to the five essential functions under SEMS: management, operations, planning/intelligence, logistics, and finance/administration.

Other information covered in the emergency plan includes procedures for the preservation and continuity of city government (including lines of succession, temporary city-government seats, a temporary alternate EOC and preservation of vital records); coordination with Alameda County, other cities, special districts, and nonprofit and volunteer organizations; day-to-day management of the EOC; policies for activation of the EOC and of the five functional sections described above; and organizational and responsibility charts. General duties and responsibilities are outlined for every party responsible for emergency response—from the mayor and city council to every unit and

Regulations establishing the Standardized Emergency Management System are found in Section 8607 of the California Government Code.

branch of the five functional sections—and extensively detailed action checklists are provided for each party. Finally, the plan’s appendices include such resources as disaster reporting forms, emergency notification and employee-recall procedures, sample press releases and public-information notices, and sample resolutions declaring a local emergency or requesting a state emergency.

Besides the SEMS emergency plan, there are many plans and reports that address emergency-management operations in Oakland. Copies of most of those documents, even of those prepared by agencies other than the City of Oakland, are found in the EOC. These documents include:

- OES and citywide Power Outages: Response Concept of Operations
- Oakland Metropolitan Medical Response System Plan
- Alameda County Multicasualty Medical Response Plan
- Alameda County Oil Spill Response Plan
- Emergency operations plans for the Oakland Unified School District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, Alameda County Transit and Bay Area Rapid Transit



In 2000-2002, the City of Oakland, along with the cities of Alameda and San Leandro and the University of California at Berkeley, installed a network of outdoor warning sirens to alert the public in the case of emergencies. The sirens would be activated in the event of major earthquakes, chemical spills, fires, terrorist acts and other large-scale public-safety incidents to alert the public to tune in to Radio Oakland (530AM), KCBS (740AM) or KTOP (cable channel 10) for information and instructions. The network currently covers more than 83 square miles, an area occupied by 555,000 residents, and includes 27 sirens in Oakland (see Figure 2.1). The sirens’ sound range is approximately one mile and, in Oakland, coverage includes the most densely populated areas and all areas determined through an assessment survey to be at high risk for wildfire (namely the Oakland hills) and for hazardous-materials releases (along the I-880 corridor, primarily). The sirens are tested at noon on the first Wednesday of each month.

**Violent crime** OPD has recently implemented a four-phase Violence Reduction Plan, which the department hopes will lead to a dramatic and sustainable reduction in violence in the long term. The plan has five goals: to reduce injuries and deaths, especially from firearms; to reduce the fear of violent crime; to prevent incidents that discourage the legitimate use of public places; to improve the city’s image as a safe, orderly place in which to conduct business, social and recreational activities; and to foster a high level of

public trust and confidence in OPD. The components of the plan's four phases (and dates of implementation) are:

- Phase I (October 2003): coordinate and focus OPD resources towards well-defined violent-crime objectives.
- Phase II (November 2003): in partnership with the Parole Division of the California Department of Corrections, increase supervision of parolees and provide parolees with increased access to counseling and support services.
- Phase III (February 2004): in partnership with the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, increase and improve the supervision of individuals on felony probation.
- Phase IV (March 2004): in partnership with the U.S. Attorney General's Office and the FBI, dismantle violent street-level narcotics-trafficking groups by conducting focused, targeted arrests at selected locations, and carrying out prosecution efforts.

On a separate but related effort, the city's Violence Prevention Plan, adopted in July 2003, seeks to address the causes of violence and focuses on prevention and intervention efforts; as such, it is designed to complement the more traditional work of the police and criminal-justice systems. The plan is built around six policy areas, for each of which are proposed several strategies and, under each strategy, one or more objectives, with assigned activities/next steps, partners/participants and target dates. The six policy areas, and representative strategies and objectives, are:

- Prevention and positive alternatives for youth: keep youth in school, provide meaningful after-school activities and connect youth to employment opportunities.
- Breaking the cycle of family violence and sexual assault: improve OPD's response time to emergency calls, create a domestic-violence court and address elder abuse.
- Adult and young offender initiatives: increase counseling for non-arrested offenders, provide diversion services to first-time offenders and reduce recidivism among parolees.
- Reduce access to illegal weapons: offer monetary rewards for tips on stolen firearms, require permits for the purchase of ammunition and ban firearm possession on city-owned property.
- Reduce the negative impact of alcohol and drug abuse: identify establishments which sell alcohol to minors, develop a public-awareness campaign and increase the availability of treatment-on-demand services for alcohol and drug detoxification.
- Community building and problem-solving strategies: develop the capacity of neighborhood crime-prevention councils, coordinate city services by neighborhoods and educate the public on crime trends and prevention tips.

Research in the field of crime prevention has shown that opportunity—in addition to ability and motive—is essential to criminal activity. Based on this insight, police departments have shifted efforts and resources toward programs geared at removing the opportunities for crime to occur. OPD administers a number of such programs, including public education and training (on topics including personal safety, safety in the workplace, robbery prevention and theft deterrence); community assistance in security planning for situation-specific dangers (attacks against delivery trucks, for example); and the Home Alert, Merchants' Alert and Business Alert programs and the neighborhood crime prevention councils, which bring together residents, neighborhood retail merchants and other businesses, respectively, on a block-by-block or street-by-street basis to increase communal surveillance and report suspicious activity. One practical area that has perhaps not received sufficient attention from the city is the potential for physical planning and design to remove opportunities for crime and, consequently, to reduce crime rates. Research has shown that, with some exceptions, criminals tend to target locations rather than victims, and that they tend to select locations where the opportunities for committing a crime successfully are greatest. Specific areas for consideration include improved outdoor lighting, safety-friendly landscaping, more “eyes on the street” (enhanced surveillance of the public space) and the provision of “defensible space” (a sense of ownership and even territoriality, over common areas).

**Terrorism** Early this year, a group of representatives from various jurisdictions and quasi-governmental agencies in Oakland, the rest of Alameda County, and Contra Costa County—known as the Urban Area Working Group (UAWG)—came together to prepare a homeland security strategy for the region. Using guidelines provided by the State, goals and objectives to prevent and recover from acts of terrorism were developed for five relevant aspects of homeland security: law enforcement, fire/emergency medical services, emergency management, public works and general government. More recently, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has awarded an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant in the amount of \$7.8 million to the UAWG for implementation of six critical- and high-priority objectives in its strategy. The funded objectives are to enhance regional inter-operable communication systems, enhance regional information exchange networks, reduce the vulnerability of information systems, reduce the vulnerability of transportation systems, expand incident management, and improve recall and mutual aid. Grant-funded activities will be administered by a homeland security program coordinator at the Oakland city Administrator's Office.

Also earlier this year, a working group made up of representatives from various Alameda County agencies and cities, hospitals and utility providers in the county developed a Countywide Terrorism Response Plan which identifies and integrates planning efforts for terrorism response throughout the county. The purpose of the plan is to supplement existing efforts rather than replace them. The plan contains, among other sections, a strategy for responding to red-level alerts (indicating severe threat conditions) under the federal homeland security advisory system; a description of available mutual-aid resources in the event of an attack employing weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and a strategy for mass immunizations or vaccinations in the event of a bioterrorism event. Among the plans referenced in the Countywide Terrorism Response Plan are the Alameda County Coroner Mass Fatalities Plan, the Bioterrorism Response Plan for Alameda County and the Oakland Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Plan. The purpose of the MMRS Plan is to enhance the local response-system capabilities for meeting the health and medical needs of victims in the event of an incident involving weapons of mass destruction.

## 2.4 | POLICY STATEMENTS

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**POLICY PS-1** Maintain and enhance the city’s capacity to prepare for, mitigate, respond to and recover from disasters and emergencies.

- ACTION PS-1.1: Continue to maintain the city’s Emergency Operations Center in a fully functioning state of readiness.

► **OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION**

- ACTION PS-1.2: Maintain and update as necessary the Oakland Standardized Emergency Management System Plan.

► **OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION**

- ACTION PS-1.2.1: To comply with federal and state law, follow, update, and adopt the Oakland Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

► **(OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BUREAU OF PLANNING AND BUILDING AND OAKLAND PUBLIC WORKS).**

CORE: Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies

- ACTION PS-1.2.2: City staff will study the occurrence, and damage from, windstorms to the residents and businesses of Oakland. If windstorms are found to be a significant environmental hazard, then staff will include strategies to mitigate windstorms in the next update of the Oakland Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

▶ (OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION)

- ACTION PS-1.3: Work with hospitals and other appropriate private-sector entities and government agencies to prevent closure of emergency rooms and trauma centers in the city.

▶ OFD EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- ACTION PS-1.4: Continue to collaborate with adjoining jurisdictions on the network of outdoor warning sirens, and to test the sirens on a monthly basis.

▶ OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

- ACTION PS-1.5: Continue to offer community training on emergency prevention, preparedness and response as part of the CORE program.

▶ OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

**POLICY PS-2**

Reduce the city’s rate of violent crime, in particular the number of crime-related injuries and deaths, and the public fear which results from violent crime.

- ACTION PS-2.1: Conduct periodic assessments of the success of the Violence Reduction Plan, and revise the plan as necessary to continue to make progress toward achieving its goals.

▶ OPD OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

▶ OPD BUREAU OF FIELD OPERATIONS

▶ OPD BUREAU OF SERVICES

- ACTION PS-2.2: Implement the various strategies, objectives and activities contained in the Violence Prevention Plan.

▶ AS IDENTIFIED IN THE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN

- ACTION PS-2.3: Designate a staff person to conduct research and disseminate information on physical planning and design strategies that have been shown to reduce the opportunities for crime.

► **CEDA PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION**

**POLICY PS-3** Enhance the city’s capacity to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.

- **ACTION PS-3.1:** Make effective use of the Urban Area Security Initiative grant to implement the critical- and high-priority objectives identified in the homeland security strategy for the Oakland/Alameda County/Contra Costa County region.

► **OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

- **ACTION PS-3.2:** Contribute as appropriate to implementation of the Alameda Countywide Terrorism Response Plan, and update as necessary the city’s component of the plan, namely the Oakland Metropolitan Medical Response System Plan.

► **OFD EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DIVISION**

- **ACTION PS-3.3:** Continue to collaborate, develop relationships and exchange information with other local, regional, state and federal agencies and with private emergency- and utility-service providers in activities related to terrorism prevention and response.

► **OFD EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION**

## 2.5 | RESOURCES

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### Agencies consulted

- Federal Emergency Management Agency ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov))
- Governor’s Office of Emergency Services ([www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov))
- Oakland Office of Emergency Services
- American Red Cross, Bay Area chapter ([www.bayarea-redcross.org](http://www.bayarea-redcross.org))
- Salvation Army, Del Oro division ([www.salvationarmydeloro.org](http://www.salvationarmydeloro.org))
- Alameda CARD ([www.preparenow.org/alameda.html](http://www.preparenow.org/alameda.html))

**Documents consulted**

- “City of Oakland Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Emergency Plan;” Oakland Office of Emergency Services, August 2002.

**Other resources**

- California Government Code ([leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=gov](http://leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=gov))
- California Public Resources Code ([leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=prc](http://leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=prc))
- “California Environmental Quality Act” ([ceres.ca.gov/ceqa](http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa))
- Alameda Local Agency Formation Commission Municipal Service Review, Public Safety Services (Volume I; draft final) ([www.burrconsulting.com/LAFCo\\_MSR\\_Reports\\_WG.htm](http://www.burrconsulting.com/LAFCo_MSR_Reports_WG.htm))