

## **Recommendations for Local Agencies in Developing and Implementing Flood Safety Plans**

1. Local agencies should be competent in their understanding and use of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) to effectively use the Safety Plan. Agencies must use SEMS if they want to be reimbursed for emergency response costs.
2. The California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) provides a summary of SEMS at the following web address. (This site was current as of August 17, 2011.)

[http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep\\_SEMS.aspx](http://cms.calema.ca.gov/prep_SEMS.aspx)

In addition, SEMS training is available through the California Specialized Training Institute. Their main page (from which one may access the schedule) is

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/WebPage/oeswebsite.nsf/Content/A07A08A632302B7A8825742C00753452?OpenDocument>

3. Flood emergency response has its own jargon. Responders and managers should become familiar with acronyms/language (SEMS) for better interactions with other responders.
4. No emergency plan exists in isolation. Levee Maintaining Agencies (LMAs) should reach out to local government to ensure your plans mesh with theirs. This also establishes important contacts that will facilitate emergency response. If the Local Agency conducts a “Flood Awareness Week,” it would be good to invite local governments’ participation.
5. Local agencies should make time to meet with emergency coordinators/staff from local governments and discuss plans and their details. One combined meeting of all involved agencies and jurisdictions would be preferred and it needs to be repeated annually. These meetings should be documented.
6. As part of the outreach program, agencies should participate in Mutual Aid Region Advisory Council (MARAC). The CalEMA region schedules these meetings quarterly. They provide an opportunity to meet people in companion agencies.
7. A formal resolution may be needed from the local agency board recognizing plan. It could include a statement like this: “This emergency plan by Levee District #1 recognizes and is compatible with City and County plans.” Communication between local jurisdictions regarding this plan’s adoption is a good to opportunity to bring agencies together.
8. Local agencies should consider having a representative at the Joint Information Center (JIC) if the county sets it up. Even if there isn’t a presence, LMAs should coordinate news releases

through the city/county JIC. It is important that information be accurate, timely, and consistent.

9. Some cities/counties rely heavily on amateur (“Ham”) radios for emergency communication. A LMA needs be ready to use and include this communication resource in its plan either by utilizing HAM operators who are Registered Disaster Volunteers or by getting their personnel licensed and understanding operations channels.
10. Phone call lists should be separate from the adopted plan so that the plan does not have to be updated when phone numbers change.
11. Reverse 911 is a good method for making emergency notifications to the public. This capability is under the control of local government. If the LMA plans to use this technology, it should have a close connection with that government agency and have a procedure in place for its use.
12. It is a good idea to test the phone tree; however, this need not be done at 2AM to confirm procedures and numbers.
13. Similarly, the LMA should practice with drills for small events. For example, build a small ring of sandbags. Use the SEMS structures. As part of the drill, normal suppliers should be contacted to confirm telephone numbers and capabilities. Be sure to notify local emergency managers of the drill, so they can respond to public inquiries.
14. The Safety Plan should be reviewed annually for necessary modifications; prior to flood season would be a good time.
15. If possible, LMA representatives should participate with emergency exercises that neighbor agencies or local jurisdictions may conduct.
16. LMA staff and government representatives should know the potential depths of flooding from the Levee Flood Protection Zone maps.
17. Based on possible inundation depths, LMAs should plan major evacuation routes. Always consult with local emergency planners in developing these routes. While good evacuation routes have signs that designate route (A, B, C), a Local Agency should be ready to share costs of signage with local government.
18. LMAs should consider where flood relief cuts (breaches) should be located should levee systems fail. They should plan for logistics and issues these relief cuts may cause.
19. Consider re-organizing day-to-day operations processes and protocols to match emergency processes. This way, there will be less to learn in an emergency.