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## Summary of Disaster Preparedness at San Francisco International Airport

### Issue

How can the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and San Mateo County (County) improve their joint emergency preparedness?

### Summary

The location of the San Francisco Airport (SFO) within San Mateo County (SMC) dictates that the two entities coordinate their response to emergencies. The airport represents many risks to the county but it also possesses many resources that can assist the County in a crisis. A number of mutual aid agreements currently exist between the two, however, SFO is not represented on the most senior disaster planning board in the County, the Emergency Services Council.

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Emergency Services Council invite the San Francisco International Airport to join the Joint Powers Agreement as an Associate member and invite their representative to attend meetings of the Emergency Services Council.



# Disaster Preparedness at San Francisco International Airport

## Issue

How can the San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and San Mateo County (County) improve their joint emergency preparedness?

## Background

San Francisco International Airport is owned and operated by the City of San Francisco. The airport is located entirely within unincorporated San Mateo County 13 miles south of San Francisco, adjacent to the cities of Millbrae and San Bruno. In 2005 over thirty-two million passengers passed through the airport. In terms of passengers it was the thirteenth largest airport in the U.S. and the twenty-second largest airport in the world.

The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) provides basic police services to SFO and enforces the Airport Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security plan. It also supports the individual security plans of the airlines. The SFPD's Airport Bureau also plays a crucial role in the Airport's emergency response capabilities

The San Francisco Fire Department is responsible for providing fire protection, emergency medical services, training, and fire prevention for the Airport.

## Findings

- San Mateo County and the San Francisco Airport are currently mutual aid partners in a number of arenas:
  - SFO relies on county hospitals for surge capacity in the event of an incident at the airport.
  - SFO has a joint agreement with the San Mateo Department of Public Health regarding the protection against and treatment of communicable diseases.
  - SFO conducts an annual air crash exercise involving County resources.

- The fire departments of both SFO and those within the County are available to help one another in case of need. For example, SFO assistance was used in responding to a fuel truck fire on highway 101.
- SFO has a positive and informal relationship with the Office of Emergency Services (OES).
- The County Sheriff is responsible for investigation of all criminal activity at SFO and maintains an office at the airport.
- The Federal Aviation Agency requires that SFO be prepared to meet nine types of emergencies. The airport exceeds this and prepares for 13 different types of emergencies, including a major earthquake.
- SFO operates a state-of-the-art emergency operations center located at the airport.
- SFO and the County are currently discussing the hazards associated with opening a fuel depot in South San Francisco.
- According to County officials the airport represents a major risk to the County, but it also has considerable resources that could be used to assist in an emergency.
- Overall emergency planning in the County is the primary responsibility of the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) which is funded through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the 20 incorporated cities and the County. The governing body of the JPA is the Emergency Services Council.
- SFO is not a member of the JPA.

## **Conclusions**

The location of the airport within the County dictates that the two entities coordinate their response to certain emergencies. The airport represents many risks to the county but it also possesses many resources that can benefit the County in a crisis. The need for comprehensive mutual aid agreements and disaster preparedness plans will increase if an airport fuel depot is located in South San Francisco.

The foregoing Findings point to the need to include SFO in the emergency planning of San Mateo County.

## **Recommendation**

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Emergency Services Council invite the San Francisco International Airport to join the Joint Powers Agreement as an Associate member and invite their representative to attend meetings of the Emergency Services Council.



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

County Manager's Office

**DATE:** October 6, 2006  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** October 17, 2006  
**SPECIAL NOTICE:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** None

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** John L. Maltbie, County Manager  
**SUBJECT:** 2005-06 Grand Jury Response

**Recommendation**

Accept this report containing the County's responses to five 2005-06 Grand Jury reports: (1) Disaster Preparedness Training for the Residents of Cities in San Mateo County; (2) Disaster Preparedness at San Francisco International Airport; (3) Preparing for FCC-Mandated Changes in County Law Enforcement Radio Networks; (4) Disaster Preparedness in SamTrans, Environmental Services and Public Works; and (5) San Mateo County Detention Facilities.

**VISION ALIGNMENT:**

**Commitment:** Ensure Basic Health and Safety for all; and Responsive, Effective and Collaborative Government.

**Goals 7 and 20:** Maintain and enhance the public safety of all residents and visitors; and Government decisions are based on careful consideration of future impact, rather than temporary relief or immediate gain.

This activity contributes to these commitments and goals by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to ensure the public safety of County residents and visitors and to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

**Discussion**

The County is mandated to respond to the Grand Jury within 90 days from the date that reports are filed with the County Clerk and Elected Officials are mandated to respond within 60 days. It is also the County's policy to provide periodic updates to the Board and the Grand Jury on the progress of past Grand Jury recommendations requiring ongoing or further action. To that end, attached are the County's responses to the four above-mentioned Grand Jury reports on disaster preparedness issued July 19, 2006 and the Grand Jury report on detention facilities issued July 5, 2006.

## **(2) Disaster Preparedness at San Francisco International Airport**

### **Findings:**

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury findings.

### **Recommendations:**

**The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Emergency Services Council should invite the San Francisco International Airport to join the Joint Powers Agreement as an Associate member and invite their representative to attend meetings of the Emergency Services Council.**

**Response:** Concur. The Board of Supervisors will invite the San Francisco International Airport to join the Joint Powers Agreement between San Mateo County and the incorporated cities therein as an Associate Member, and will invite the representative of San Francisco International Airport to attend meetings of the Emergency Council, for which the next meeting is currently scheduled for January 18, 2007.

EMERGENCY SERVICES COUNCIL

October 13, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Superior Court Judge  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Hall,

This is in response to the Grand Jury report on Disaster Preparedness at San Francisco International Airport, dated July 19, 2006. The Emergency Services Council agrees with the findings presented in the Grand Jury report. The Emergency Services Council will invite the San Francisco International Airport to join the Joint Powers Agreement between San Mateo County and the incorporated cities therein as an Associate Member. The Emergency Services Council will also invite the representative of San Francisco International Airport to attend meetings of the Emergency Council, for which the next meeting is currently scheduled for January 18, 2007.

Sincerely,

Rose Jacobs Gibson, Chair  
Emergency Services Council  
San Mateo County Supervisor

Cc: Board of Supervisors  
John Maltbie, County Manager  
John Quinlan, Office of Emergency Services  
Don Horsley, Sheriff