

# **SAN BRUNO EXPLOSION AFTER ACTION/CORRECTION ACTION**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On September 9, 2010, at approximately 1811 hours, the San Mateo County EOC received first reports of an explosion and large fire in the City of San Bruno. The incident, referred to at that time as the Glenview Incident, was located in the area of San Bruno Avenue and Skyline Boulevard in the City of San Bruno.

Though initial reports stated this incident might involve a commercial or military aircraft down in a residential neighborhood, all local aircraft were accounted for by the Air Force, Transportation Security Agency, and Federal Aviation Administration. It was determined that the explosion and fire were the result of a natural gas line rupture. According to the California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA), the explosion resulted from a 16 – 30-inch Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) natural gas line rupture.

The City of San Bruno committed all available resources to the incident, and then requested additional resources from the other agencies in the County of San Mateo. County Communications then requested mutual aid early from nearby Operational Areas (OAs) and from Region II.

### **Incident Period**

September 9 – 11, 2010

### **Location**

City of San Bruno, San Mateo County

### **Injuries and Fatalities**

Confirmed fatalities: 8

56 people were injured and seen at local hospitals. 15 people were transported by ambulance and eight burn admissions were confirmed at San Francisco hospital burn centers.

### **Damages**

- 37 homes were destroyed.
- Nine homes were yellow tagged – residents were allowed access to the homes but the homes were uninhabitable due to utility issues or damage. Residents were permitted re-entry but not allowed to return to their residences permanently at that time.
- 315 homes were green tagged. Residents were allowed to return permanently, though seven homes were not released for occupancy to allow for a buffer zone around the incident site.

## **Evacuations**

The San Bruno Fire Department issued an evacuation order for ¾ mile radius surrounding the incident. Approximately 377 homes were vacated during the Glenview Fire. Three shelters were opened in the vicinity. The American Red Cross provided assistance to evacuees in the reunification process. PG&E provided displaced victims with hotel vouchers.

Though the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) reported that eight licensed health care facilities were in the vicinity of the incident, no reported impacts or air quality issues were reported and evacuation of the facilities was determined to be unnecessary. The Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) conducted a Statewide Burn Bed Capacity Survey to identify resources if needed to accommodate the injured. Regional medical mutual aid was activated and ground ambulance resources within Region II were sufficient.

## **State Activations**

September 9, 2010, at 1955 hours: The State Operations Center (SOC) was activated at Duty Officer Status and the Coastal Regional Emergency Operation Center (REOC) was activated at Level 2 in support of the San Mateo County EOC.

September 11, 2010, at 1930 hours: The fire was declared contained.

September 10, 2010, at 0230 hours: The SOC, Coastal REOC, and San Mateo EOC were deactivated and returned to Duty Officer Status.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

Successful operations were highlighted in the following areas: efficient resources deployment; effective fire suppression and control; notification and alert; sheltering operations; and coordination between state agencies and local governments.

Based on input from the various state and local agencies that participated in the SOC and REOC activities or provided field support to the OAs, the following is a summary of some of the successes that were achieved during the response and recovery phases of this disaster.

- State and local agencies responded in a very timely and efficient manner.
- First responders took appropriate initial actions, provided life saving and patient care, evaluated and prioritized property at risk, and attempted to establish a successful safe course of action.
- Implementation of the unified command structure resulted in successful and efficient operations.
- Unified command and strong coordination between fire and law enforcement was key to evacuating the residents.
- This incident utilized the California Master Mutual Aid system exactly as the system was intended and developed.

- Strong inter-agency coordination and relationships between local, state, and federal agencies played an instrumental role in responding to this emergency.
- The FMAG process worked effectively to ensure local government had the resources needed to control the spread of the fire and prevent the fire from becoming a larger disaster. The FMAG declaration provides federal financial assistance on an expedited basis to fund firefighting efforts mitigation, and management activities.
- The LACs provided a central place for disaster survivors to talk face-to-face with numerous state and local agency representatives, elected and local officials, and insurance companies.
- San Mateo County submitted numerous, detailed and Situation Reports which contributed to providing real-time awareness of a rapidly changing incident to all local, regional, and State stakeholders.
- Response from CDPH was effective:
  1. The Duty Officers responded appropriately based on the level of emergency.
  2. Internal CDPH programs were appropriately notified.
  3. Situation Reports were created at the local and state level.
  4. Burn Bed counts were established in a timely manner
- The American Red Cross participated in the LAC to provide assistance and reunification services to survivors.
- The City of San Bruno was able to establish a site for evacuees to gather at a facility well known to the community.
- County Public Health and Mental Health Departments worked closely with the American Red Cross for mental health needs and to ensure adequate services were being provided. Staff was also available at the LAC for crisis counseling and medical needs. Agencies at the LAC coordinated well and supported decisions made when the evacuation center transitioned to a LAC. Agencies worked together to maximize resources and were sensitive to survivor's needs and issues.

This report identifies areas in need of improvement and includes recommended corrective actions to address the needed improvements. The report provides specific information regarding these matters, and the following summarizes the key findings of this report:

- The SEMS process was not utilized as designed, creating issues among responding agencies in determining roles, responsibilities and overall coordination.
- The Master Mutual Aid system was successfully utilized, but additional training and education is needed to ensure that the local agencies, Operational Areas and Regional staff all understand roles and responsibilities.
- Disconnects were identified across all levels of the ICS functions.
- Volunteer and donations management processes were in need of direction for spontaneous volunteerism and donations.
- Recovery activities were in need of clarification of roles and responsibilities among participants at the Local Assistance Center (LAC), as duplication of effort and confusion occurred.

Public information and communications activities were hindered by lack of a formal and full time JIC and assigned Public Information Officer, standardized process for providing patient counts and situation reporting.

## **ORGANIZATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS REPORT**

The following agencies and departments contributed After Action Reports and Surveys to this report:

### State Agencies and Departments:

California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA)  
CalRecycle  
Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA)  
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
Franchise Tax Board (FTB)  
State Board of Equalization (BOE)

### Local Government/Operational Areas:

San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services & Homeland Security