

Section 6: Role of the Board of Directors in a Crisis

EVMWD Board Best Management Practices

The Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District is governed by a five-member board of directors who are elected to staggered four-year terms by registered voters within their divisions, as defined by the Division boundary map. Regular meetings of the board of directors are open to the public and are held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, 4:00 P.M., 31315 Chaney Street, Lake Elsinore, CA.

The President is the designated spokesperson for the Board of Directors to the general public. The President may elect to appoint one of the other Board Members to serve in this capacity.

The Board of Directors approved the development of a Comprehensive Organizational Development Plan (Plan) in September of 2014. The Plan assists District leadership in better defining appropriate management policies and procedures while improving the overall management efficiency of the District. The Board Member Best Management Practices Handbook touches on Board member communications – these are highlighted in this section.

EVMWD Board of Director's Emergency Response

The board of Directors adopted the Emergency Response Plan, which includes a Board of Directors Emergency response Overview in 2015. While this chapter covers communications and the Board, the Board of Directors' emergency response guidelines, in their entirety, are available in the Emergency Response Plan.

Elected Officials: What You Need to Know about NIMS

From the FEMA Integration Center

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) was published by the Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2004. It provides a comprehensive and consistent national approach to all-hazard incident management at all jurisdictional levels and across all functional emergency management disciplines.

Since most incidents occur and are handled by local government, the support of elected and appointed officials in the NIMS implementation process is crucial to the nation's success in preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters – regardless of their cause.

The benefit of NIMS is especially evident at the local level, when the entire community prepares for and provides an integrated response to an incident. Elected and appointed officials need to be involved in all aspects of NIMS implementation to include the following:

- Adopt NIMS at the community level for all government departments and agencies and encourage NIMS adoption and use by associations, utilities, non-government organizations and the private sector.

- NIMS should be adopted through executive order, proclamation, resolution, or legislation as the jurisdiction's official all-hazards, incident response system.

The NIMS necessitates the use of the Incident Command System, the multi-agency coordination systems and a public information system. All these command and management systems rely on the direct involvement of elected and appointed officials in a community during an incident.

When implementing NIMS, all emergency plans and SOPs must incorporate NIMS components, principles and policies, including emergency planning, training, response, exercises, equipment, evaluation, and corrective action plans. Elected and appointed officials of a community need to be directly involved in these NIMS preparedness elements, especially when the community exercises its emergency management policies, plans, procedures and resources.

Jurisdictions will be required to meet the FY 2006 NIMS implementation requirements as a condition of receiving federal preparedness funding assistance in FY 2007. However, it is important to recognize that the NIMS is a dynamic system, and the doctrine as well as the implementation requirements will continue to evolve as our emergency management capabilities nationwide change based on the hazards and threats of the nation.

The NIC strongly recommends that elected and appointed officials complete IS-700 NIMS: An Introduction and ICS-100: An Introduction to ICS training courses. They are available online at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslst.asp>

The EVMWD Board in a Crisis/Emergency

It is important that the EVMWD Board understand what their role is prior to a disaster.

Not only do elected and appointed officials need to be ready to respond to disasters, they should also take pre-emptive measures to mitigate or lessen the effects of disasters on their communities. While unable to prevent floods or wildfires from striking, the Board can lessen the impact through preparedness, budgeting, communications and prevention activities.

When the Board of Directors participates in social media, communications shall be in compliance with the General Social Media Use policy, Section 1470 of the Administrative Code and the Board's Best Practices guide

Depending on the incident, recovery may be long term. Repair/replacement of facilities, clean-up and debris removal could take weeks, if not months. If a community and water systems are devastated, the rebuilding process could take years. When water delivery systems are impacted – either short term or for a long period – the confidence in EVMWD will be impacted by the roles/actions of the Board.

While the public will be extremely patient during the initial few days of an emergency, if they are not directly affected, they expect that EVMWD will also provide the same general services that it did prior to the disaster. This poses challenges because staff is usually stretched thin responding to and then recovering from the disaster.

Learning to balance long-term recovery with the day-to-day expectations of customers is essential.

Board Communication Roles During a Crisis

In a disaster, it's crucial for elected officials to have a framework that enables them to maintain a strong leadership role while remaining above the incident command and business continuity functions.

As part of such a framework, EVMWD fits into the emergency response process in the following ways:

- Set the tone and direction for community prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities;
- Understand the incident objectives, provide visible leadership and set policy;
- Visit the EOC periodically;
- Rely on the General Manager for information;
- Provide overall policy direction for the GM/senior staff;
- Promote the timely completion of preliminary damage assessments;
- Participate in press conferences, represented by the President and GM; and
- Post to individual communications channels / social media channels information approved for release by the EOC/PIO.

Board Members refer responses and inquiries to customer or media concerns either to the General Manager or the President.

Board Steps After a Disaster:

1. Tour damaged areas and meet with impacted customers, as requested by the PIO or Liaison Officer.
2. Approve a recovery plan and work with local, state and federal agencies to secure recovery funds.
3. During the recovery process, consider mitigation projects that could lessen or prevent future damage.
4. Work with a long-term recovery committee to address long-term needs.
5. Participate in after action reviews/critiques.

Adapted from "Crisis Leadership: Understanding The Emergency Response System and The Elected Official's Role" by Jim Madaffer, former member of the San Diego City Council and a past president of the League of California Cities; and various articles by David L. Maack, the Racine County emergency management coordinator.

EVMWD Board of Director’s Emergency Response – Introduction

Position Overview

The Board of Directors is the senior policymaking body for the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District. In the event of an emergency\disaster, the Board of Directors is responsible for proclaiming and/ or ratifying local emergencies, approving emergency resolutions and orders, hosting VIPs and government officials on tours of affected areas, and providing information to the public in coordination with the Public Information Officer or Liaison Officer. In order to maintain a clear and concise line between the Board of Directors' role and responsibilities and the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), consider the following list of responsibilities:

Operational Duties:

Board of Directors’ Responsibilities	EVMWD Staff Responsibilities
<p>Call emergency meetings of the Board of Directors as necessary. Guidelines Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) members of the Board of Directors are needed for an official quorum • Emergency Rules and Regulations made by the EOC Manager must be confirmed at the earliest practical time • Approve extraordinary expenditures as necessary 	<p>EVMWD staff will respond to the EOC and participate in the planning and response to emergencies. The EOC Manager, Public Information Officer (PIO), or Liaison Officer will provide the Board of Directors with all required information and status updates.</p>
<p>Host and Accompany VIP on tours of the disaster area(s) as requested by PIO or Liaison Officer</p>	<p>PIO or Liaison Officer is responsible for requesting a member from the Board of Directors to provide VIP tours or to offer pictures of the disaster area(s)</p>
<p>Oversee the release of Official Statements that have been approved by the incident PIO or Commander and Liaison Officer. These statements can be used to provide the public information or conduct media interviews along with the PIO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the needs of the community and report back to the Liaison Officer. Avoid offering solutions or making promises to the community. • Encourage post-event discussions in the community to identify potential areas of improvement and report back to the Liaison Officer. Avoid offering excuses or admitting fault to negative feedback. 	<p>PIO or Liaison Officer will solicit feedback and status updates from the staff at the EOC or Incident Command Center. He/she will provide the Board of Directors with statements or comments to provide other districts, governmental agencies or the public.</p>