

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

Overview of Pasadena Emergency Management and Tour of City of Pasadena Emergency Operations Center

April 25, 2023

City of Pasadena Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) Azell Carter, head of the city's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), provided an overview of emergency management in Pasadena and hosted a tour of the city's Frank Bengochea Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Carter also showed members the city's Dispatch Center where, for example, 911 calls are received and emergency services dispatched. Laura Mireles, City of Pasadena Public Information Officer (PIO) described the city's communications resources and the departments using social media platforms. Slides are posted at www.pasadenacac.org

The Pasadena EOC is a specially equipped facility where those with roles in emergency response and recovery gather face to face to manage a disaster. Perhaps the most impressive part of the city's newest EOC was the room-length video wall that includes 30 screens that each may be split into 4 screens. Slides show the OEM staff members, list the OEM equipment, provide an overview of terms, and list the risks and hazards for which the city must be prepared. The city will soon have a drone unit and a new mobile command trailer. The improvements to manage emergencies have been funded primarily by grants.

The city has 12 warning sirens, some dating back to the early 1990s. Sirens now are tested each Saturday at noon as are the Deer Park and La Porte sirens. A review of siren locations is underway as is an evaluation of which ones need to be rebuilt or replaced.

The city uses the community emergency communications protocols for plants and cities found in the East Harris County Manufacturers Association *Industry Incident Communications Handbook*, developed to provide consistency among cities and industry to promote prompt and clear notifications when a plant has a significant event. The city is part of the Southeast Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee (SERLEPC), which requires industrial facilities to use the e-Notify system to notify the city of industrial events.

Carter urged those who live, work, or play in Pasadena to sign up with *Ready Pasadena* to be able to receive alerts from the OEM.

To receive Emergency Notifications

Text: PTXREADY to 77295

or sign up at www.readypasadena.org

A call to shelter in place for a chemical release would be made by the city and would involve the police and fire departments and the OEM. The plant with the event may *recommend* a shelter in place, but state law does not permit plants to *issue* one.

The EOC activates for any kind of hazard, not just a chemical release. That includes activating to manage a hurricane. Slides show evacuation routes in the greater Houston area as well as the 2023 evacuation

zip-zone map. Authorities will issue evacuation orders based on zip code to make it easier for people to understand when they should leave. Evacuation calls are phased to let those closest to the coast to get out of the area first.