

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Emergency Preparedness: The Role of Local Law Enforcement Agencies

Report Date: June 17, 2026

Response by: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

The county partially agrees with the findings numbered five through seven.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation five will not be implemented.

Date:

9/1/26

Signed:



Number of pages attached: 4



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

825 Fifth Street, Suite 112, Eureka, CA 95501

707-445-7266 CAO@co.humboldt.ca.us

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO "EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: THE ROLE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES:
DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

In the Grand Jury Report, "*Emergency Preparedness: The Role of Local Law Enforcement Agencies*," the Grand Jury has requested that the Board of Supervisors respond to Findings 5 through 7 and Recommendation 5. The County Administrative Office is proposing the following response as detailed below.

FINDINGS

Finding 5: *Incident Command System training is a core component of California and national emergency response protocols, but is typically received by law enforcement officers only when they are at the police academy. This knowledge degrades without refresher training. (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8)*

Partially agree: The Board of Supervisors agrees that Incident Command System (ICS) training is a core component of local, state and federal emergency response protocol and that ongoing training in ICS is important in order to serve the community effectively. As such, ICS is included in policies, practices and trainings for both administrative staff and deputies in the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office.

The Humboldt County Sheriff has confirmed that staff and deputies are required to review and understand the following plans and policies annually, which include ICS:

- Emergency Management Plan (Policy 202)
- Control Devices and Techniques (Policy 303)
- Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths (Policy 305)
- Missing Persons (Policy 315)
- Office Use of Social Media (Policy 342)
- Tsunami Response (Policy 348)
- Use of the Incident Command System (401)

- Crisis Response Unit (Policy 405)
- Mobile Field Force (Policy 406)
- Rapid Response and Deployment (Policy 414)
- Aircraft Accidents (Policy 418)
- First Amendment Assemblies (Policy 432)
- Line-of-Duty Deaths (Policy 931)

Additionally, all county employees, including sworn and civilian staff in the Sheriff's Office, are required to be trained in Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) ICS courses including:

- IS-100, which is introduction to ICS that covers its basic principles, organizational structure, functional areas and terminology.
- IS-200, which builds on ICS-100 and prepares personnel who may assume a supervisory role during an initial incident response.
- IS-700, which introduces personnel to the National Incident Management System (NIMS), provides an overview of NIMS and explains how agencies and organizations work together to manage emergencies using common systems and procedures.

However, it should be noted that FEMA's ICS training has become harder for county staff to access this year due to recent federal budget cuts, funding lapses and temporary system shutdowns outside of the county's control.

Finally, Sheriff's Office employees are trained in Humboldt County Criminal Multi-Casualty Incident (CMCI) response protocol, which is a countywide framework for coordinating law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services during incidents involving multiple casualties, such as an active shooter event. CMCI protocol establishes common responsibilities, terminology, tactics, assessment procedures, and victim treatment and extraction practices during the initial four to eight hours of a response to this type of emergency.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office developed the CMCI protocol for the county's Operational Area and coordinated the countywide training when it was initiated. The Sheriff has confirmed his office is researching bringing this training back to Operational Area partners in addition to mobile field force training for the entire county.

Finding 6: Scenario-based Incident Command System training is not regularly conducted due to staffing constraints and budgetary limitations. As a result, local law enforcement officers may not be adequately trained in their disaster-response roles. (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8)

Partially agree. The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that scenario-based ICS training may be limited due to capacity and budget constraints of the Sheriff's Office, however regular scenario-based training does occur for county staff.

Regular scenario-based ICS training is mandated for certain incidents and facilities, for example, the Federal Aviation Administration requires all certified commercial airports to conduct a yearly Airport Emergency Plan tabletop exercise and an annual aircraft rescue and firefighting training exercise, in addition to a full-scale mass casualty training exercise every three years. These trainings are held at the California-Redwood Coast-Humboldt

County Airport (ACV) and typically include personnel from the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services and other relevant agencies.

Additionally, regarding deputies, the Sheriff's Office recently conducted tsunami drills and exercises where deputies assisted in emergency response functions, including evacuations.

Finding 7: When held, scenario-based disaster response training typically focuses on agency coordination, mitigation, and planning, but often does not include the actual activities that need to be performed during a real event. As a result, law enforcement officers may not be adequately trained on the specific skills needed to respond to disasters in their communities. (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8)

Partially agree. The Board of Supervisors agrees that realistic, scenario-based training is necessary to ensure county personnel in all departments are prepared to respond and serve the community effectively during critical incidents, large scale emergencies and natural disasters.

While some scenario-based disaster response training focuses on coordination and planning, many emergency training exercises, including the tabletop exercises and full-scale training exercises mentioned in response to Finding 6, include time dedicated to discussing and actively practicing the activities that need to be performed during an actual critical incident, large scale emergency event or natural disaster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 5: The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors add scenario-based Incident Command System Field Response Training as a separate line item within the FY 2027-2028 Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Training Budget. (F5, F6, F7)

Funding Recommendation: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors fund the expenses listed in R5 with existing appropriations in the next fiscal year. If current appropriations are not sufficient, the Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors, at its earliest opportunity, pursue additional funding from an appropriate organization, including state or federal agencies.*

Additionally, the Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors reassess funding priorities to give greater priority to all areas of emergency management and response within Humboldt County.

This recommendation will not be implemented. During the fiscal year 2026-27 Budget Hearings, the Board of Supervisors directed the County Administrative Officer and all county departments to complete a comprehensive review of the county's mandated services in order to work toward closing the \$12 million structural deficit in the General Fund in fiscal year 2027-28.

While the Sheriff has also confirmed that his office has the capacity to develop curriculum and training scenarios involving a range of complex emergencies requiring the use of ICS, a specific budget allocation would need to be evaluated in terms of the overall budget during the fiscal year 2027-28 budget process in

terms of priority and availability of funding.

Before this can be evaluated, the Sheriff's Office must research the total anticipated cost associated with these scenario-based training exercises including, but not limited to, staffing, overtime, instructor, equipment, facility and operational costs. Following its research, the Sheriff's Office must determine the appropriate funding level and identify the most effective way to implement the training.

It should be noted that the Sheriff has confirmed that scenario-based ICS field response training will be included in the department's regular training schedule in the 2027-28 fiscal year, therefore, Board encourages the Sheriff's Office and the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services to collaborate more with other county departments, such as the Department of Aviation, in addition to other government and law enforcement agencies within the Humboldt County Operational Area, to plan and execute mandated scenario-based emergency training exercises that include an ICS component, in order to meet these mandates and reduce costs.
