



HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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July 27, 2026

Honorable Kelly Neel, Presiding Judge
Humboldt County Superior Court
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Grand Jury Reports

Dear Honorable Kelly Neel,

Attached are my responses to the 2026 Grand Jury reports. I appreciate the Grand Jury's reports, findings, and recommendations. If you have any questions please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "WFH", is written over a printed name.

William F Honsal, Sheriff

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2026 RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

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

Report Date: June 2026

Response by: W. Honsal, Sheriff, County of Humboldt

FINDINGS

F1-F7, F9 See Following Pages

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1, R4, R6 - See following pages

Date: 7/27/2026

Signed: W. Honsal

Number of pages attached: 5

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY STATEMENT

FINDINGS:

Finding 1:

Local law enforcement agencies can provide input into the Humboldt County Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Emergency Operations Plan, but many do not participate. Non-inclusion in the plans may hinder coordination with other first responders during a disaster.

Response: Agree

Finding 2:

Local law enforcement agency representatives typically do not attend regular Office of Emergency Services meetings due to time constraints or higher priority obligations. Irregular participation in these meetings limits their ability to share their experience and may also lead to reduced coordination with other first responders during a disaster.

Response: Agree

Finding 3:

Local government representatives (such as city managers) who do attend the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services meetings may not provide input from a law enforcement perspective. This lack of input can result in the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services not being fully aware of the priorities and requirements of local law enforcement agencies as it updates the Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations Plans.

Response: Agree

Finding 4:

The unique disaster response needs of local communities are known by experienced officers, but are not always articulated in local law enforcement agency disaster response documentation. As a result, new or less experienced officers may not have access to this information.

Response: Agree

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.

Response: Disagree

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office does train their deputies with the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS is a part of policies and each deputy is required to review these policies annually:

Policy 202 — Emergency Management Plan
 Policy 303 — Control Devices and Techniques
 Policy 305 — Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths
 Policy 315 — Missing Persons
 Policy 348 — Tsunami Response
 Policy 401 — Use of the Incident Command System
 Policy 405 — Crisis Response Unit
 Policy 406 — Mobile Field Force
 Policy 408 — Hazardous Materials
 Policy 414 — Rapid Response and Deployment
 Policy 418 — Aircraft Accidents
 Policy 432 — First Amendment Assemblies
 Policy 931 — Line-of-Duty Deaths

We train several of our employees the Standardized Emergency Management System to include:

IS-100 — Introduction to the Incident Command System: Introduces the basic principles, organizational structure, functional areas, and terminology of ICS.

IS-200 — Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response: Builds on ICS-100 and prepares personnel who may assume a supervisory role during an initial incident response.

IS-700 — An Introduction to the National Incident Management System: Provides an overview of NIMS and explains how agencies and organizations work together to manage emergencies using common systems and procedures.

We also train our employees with the Humboldt County Criminal Multi-Casualty Incident response protocol (CMCI). It is a countywide operational framework for coordinating law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services during criminal incidents involving multiple casualties, such as an active shooter or active assailant event. The protocol establishes common responsibilities, terminology, tactics, incident assessment procedures, victim treatment, and extraction practices for the initial four to eight hours of a response.

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.

Response: Agree

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.

Response: Partially Agree

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office developed the countywide Criminal Multi-Casualty Incident Response Protocol and coordinated the associated multi-agency training several years ago. We are currently evaluating the reintroduction of this training, along with countywide Mobile Field Force training for participating law enforcement agencies. The Sheriff's Office has also conducted tsunami exercises in which deputies assisted with evacuation operations and other emergency-response functions. As the report highlights, realistic, scenario-based training is essential to ensure law enforcement personnel are prepared to respond effectively during critical incidents, large-scale emergencies, and natural disasters.

Finding 9:

Availability of specialized disaster response equipment is less of an issue for the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. This allows them to respond to local disasters more effectively themselves and to serve as a potential source of equipment for local agencies.

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1:

The Humboldt County Sheriff direct Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services to encourage participation by law enforcement agencies in regular meetings by including standing law enforcement agency-relevant agenda items to gather input for the emergency plans by no later than December 31, 2026.

The recommendation will be implemented by the December 31, 2026 recommendation.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, through the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services, will encourage participation by local law enforcement agencies in regular emergency-planning meetings by including standing agenda items that are relevant to law enforcement operations. The Sheriff's Office will provide a presentation at an upcoming Humboldt County Law Enforcement Chiefs Association meeting to explain the emergency-planning process, identify opportunities for agency participation, and encourage law enforcement executives and designated personnel to provide input. In addition, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services will contact each law enforcement agency by email to describe the process for reviewing emergency plans, submitting recommendations, and participating in future planning meetings. These efforts will be completed no later than December 31, 2026.

R4:

The Humboldt County Sheriff request the addition of 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.

The recommendation requires analysis.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing employees with the highest-quality training available and supports the development of scenario-based Incident Command System field response training. The Sheriff's Office can develop practical training exercises involving disaster response, active-assailant incidents, missing-person investigations, search-and-

rescue operations, and other complex emergencies requiring the use of the Incident Command System. Developing the curriculum and scenarios is within our abilities; however, the primary financial impact would be the personnel costs associated with delivering the training to the entire sworn staff. Because most training is conducted during deputies' regularly scheduled days off, department-wide participation would require a significant overtime expenditure. Before adding this training as a separate line item within the FY 2027–2028 Sheriff's Office Training Budget, the Sheriff's Office will need to evaluate the anticipated overtime, instructor, equipment, facility, and operational coverage costs. Following that analysis, the Sheriff's Office can determine the appropriate funding level and identify the most effective method for implementing the training.

R5:

The Humboldt County Sheriff add scenario-based Incident Command System Field Response Training for Sheriff's Office staff to the regular training schedule by no later than July 1, 2028.

The recommendation will be implemented by July 1, 2028.

I will incorporate the ICS training into our regular training schedule for the FY2027-2028.