Orange County Government 3-1-1

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Communication flow and information management are critical in emergency response and disaster recovery. The 311 system design and protocols must respond to the needs and expected outcomes for a variety of different groups that go to work during an emergency. Large quantities of incoming data must be appropriately grouped, queried, parsed, reported, or summarized to become meaningful information for emergency response personnel.

The manager of a field operation center (FOC), for example, needs detailed incident information, including problem description and a street address or location to initiate a tactical response. On the other hand, a representative in the policy group usually needs to know that a large volume of categorical incidents—such as the volume and general location of calls about power outages—are occurring in an area. He or she will not need addresses or each caller's contact information.

Effective emergency response involves coordination, and coordination requires communication. Consideration should be given to a bi-lateral flow of information to allow for proper feedback to the designated staff making strategic decisions. Figure 1 shows a sample chart of 311 call flow during emergency response and disaster recovery.

It does not address detailed and specific protocol because each local jurisdiction has the flexibility of implementing various adaptations of 311 depending on service expectations, funding, or political input.

Yet there are some common considerations that support a good plan.

A large percentage of the community understands the scope of a response requiring law enforcement or emergency transport (911 calls), but a small percentage of those calls might wind up in the queue of the 311 call taker. Fallen trees on public property, for example, are routinely appropriate to process, but the presence of entangled electrical wires escalates the incident to a 911-type call.

311 personnel cannot presume that the general public will correctly triage every incident. Furthermore, some calls will be placed to 911 that are not life-threatening emergencies or other types of appropriate 911 calls. Coordination and protocol should be established between 311 and 911 administration to process either scenario.

Technological advances in relational databases, interfaces, and geographic information systems (GIS) provide opportunities for enhanced communication. GIS allows the decision makers to visualize, interpret, understand, and question data in ways that expose trends and relationships in the form of maps, charts, and reports.

With an emergency communications plan in place, an effective 311 system can help satisfy a wide range of communication needs, including providing real-time data and information to emergency response personnel, as well as answering questions from the public.

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311
SYNERGY GROUP

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COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
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311 Call Flow During Emergency Activation

311	FOC or Tactical Responder	ESFs in EOC	Policy Group

Calls To 311

911 Response? —Yes→ **911 Coordination** → **End Call**

No ↓

Information Only ? —Yes→ **Knowledge Management System** → **End Call**

No ↓

Incident? —Yes→ **CRM Application** → **Detailed Incident Information** → **Condensed Incident Information** → **Condensed Strategic Information**

No ↓

Calls Beyond Scope of 311 → **End Call**

Work Order Application → **Response Updates** → **End Call**

Disaster Application → **Status Updates** → **End Call**

GIS Maps

If different CRM

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