

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) and Participating Agencies are preparing an update to its Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). This plan will help create a safer community for residents, businesses, and visitors. The MJHMP allows public safety officials and agency staff, elected officials, and members of the public to understand the threats from natural and human-caused hazards in our community. The plan will also recommend specific actions to proactively decrease these threats before disasters occur.

Why have an MJHMP?

An MJHMP will help SOCWA and Participating Agencies better plan for future emergencies. Usually, after a disaster occurs, communities take steps to recover from the emergency and rebuild. An MJHMP is a way for the Agency to better prepare in advance for these disasters so less damage occurs, and recovery is easier. Our community can use MJHMP strategies to reduce instances of property damage, injury, and loss of life from disasters. Besides protecting public health and safety, this approach can save money. Studies estimate that every dollar spent on mitigation saves an average of four dollars on response and recovery costs. An MJHMP can also help strengthen the mission of public safety officers, such as police and fire department staff, providing them with clear roles and responsibilities to build a safer community. Besides helping protect our assets and properties within the planning area, our MJHMP will make the Agency eligible for grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that can be used to further improve safety and preparedness in the community. Having an adopted MJHMP can also provide eligibility to receive more financial assistance from the State when disasters occur.

What is in our MJHMP?

SOCWA and Participating Agencies MJHMP includes four main sections:

- A summary of the natural and human-caused hazards that pose a risk to our community.
- An assessment of the threat to MWDOC and Participating Agencies, which will describe how our community is vulnerable to future disasters.
- A hazard mitigation strategy, which will lay out specific policy recommendations to carry out over the next five years.
- A section on maintaining the plan, which will help ensure that our MJHMP is kept up-to-date.

What hazards will our MJHMP help protect against?

The MWDOC MJHMP plans to include the following natural and human-cause hazards:

- Power Outage
- Wildfire
- Seismic Hazards – Ground Shaking
- Seismic Hazards – Liquefaction
- High Winds/Santa Ana Winds
- Drought
- Dam/Reservoir Failure
- Flood
- Earthquake Fault Rupture
- Landslide/Mudflow
- Contamination

- Human-Cause Hazards – Terrorism
- Human-Caused Hazards – Hazardous Materials
- Urban Fire
- Geologic Hazards – Land Subsidence
- Geologic Hazards – Expansive Soils
- Tsunami
- Climate Change
- Coastal Storms/Erosion

While many of these hazards may affect our specific agency, for those that are not relevant, the plan will provide an explanation regarding its exclusion.

How is our MJHMP being prepared?

MWDOC and Participating Agencies have assembled a Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC), which includes representatives from Agency Departments and is supported by key stakeholders and technical consultants. Together, these participants form the project team responsible for guiding the overall development of our MJHMP.

When will our MJHMP be done?

The project team plans to release a Public Review Draft MJHMP in Fall 2024. After members of the public provide comments and feedback, the Agency will revise the plan and send it to the California Office of Emergency Services and FEMA for review and approval. Once approved by these agencies, the decision making body of our Agency will adopt the final MJHMP.

How can I get involved?

You can get involved in preparing our MJHMP in different ways.

- The Agency will have public engagement opportunities to share information about our MJHMP and obtain community feedback. Stay tuned for these opportunities.
- Please take our online survey <https://forms.gle/RmJDAJddw4CfnrXC7>, which is available through October 2024. Please share this link with your family and friends.
- The Agency will release a draft of the completed MJHMP for public review. Please review and provide comments on this document, either at community engagement opportunities or in writing.
- Encourage members of the Agency's Board of Directors to adopt the plan and begin implementing it.
- Reach out to Sean Peacher at speacher@socwa.com or (949) 234-5443 for more ways to stay involved.

What can I do now to be better prepared for disasters?

- Know the hazards that may affect you at home, work, or school. You can find out more at <http://myhazards.caloes.ca.gov/>.
- Assemble an emergency kit for your home. In a disaster, you may have to rely on supplies in your emergency kit for at least three days. Be sure to include supplies for any pets and anyone in your home with special needs. Learn more at <https://www.ready.gov/kit>.
- Have a disaster plan for your household, including how people should contact each other if a disaster occurs and where you should meet.

- Learn about your neighbors and how to help them. In a disaster, emergency responders may not be able to reach your neighborhood for a while. Know if your neighbors have any special needs, and check on them as soon as possible.
- Make sure your homeowner's or renter's insurance covers you from disasters such as earthquakes and floods. If these disasters occur, having good insurance coverage will help you recover more easily.
- Volunteer with an emergency response or community service organization that does work on disaster education and preparation.
- Speak to your employer about creating a disaster recovery, workforce communication, and/or business continuity plan. If they already have one or more of these plans in place, make sure you and your co-workers know it.