



## COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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### **San Diego Countywide Power Outage**

**September 8, 2011**

#### **After Action Report Highlights**

- The Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization in coordination with the County of San Diego provided California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) with an After Action Report with details about the emergency response to, and lessons learned from, the regional power outage on September 8, 2011.
- The San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Operations Center activated at a Level I at 3:50 p.m. on September 8, and immediately sent an OES liaison to SDG & E, who communicated that the outage was expected to continue for an extended time. By 4:18 p.m., the Emergency Operations Center had activated at a Level III, the highest level, and the County proclaimed a local emergency at 4:42 p.m.
- OES' first priority focused on stabilizing and addressing immediate safety issues such as traffic intersections, elevator entrapments, hospitals, health care facilities, and other critical lifelines.
- Another main focus was sharing accurate and timely information to the public through news releases, social media updates, the emergency website and two evening news conferences.
- Fire and police departments reported that they were able to maintain 911 and dispatch operations during the blackout using backup generators. Call volume increased to as much as triple the daily averages.
- The San Diego Police Department, Sheriff's Department and other law enforcement agencies increased staffing to provide traffic control and additional street patrols.
- Widespread traffic signal outages raised the issue of backup battery capability of signals.

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Fact Sheet for Public Distribution

- The Hospital Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties advised that all hospitals were able to operate normally, although they did experience the challenge of increased volume to local emergency rooms by residents dependent on oxygen and respirator equipment.
- The effectiveness of AlertSanDiego, one of the region's reverse 911 systems, was severely diminished during the power outage because many residents only have cordless phones that require electricity to work, highlighting the need for residents to maintain a landline telephone in their home that does not require power to operate.
- Traffic signal outages impacted both bus and rail operations, and the San Diego Trolley system was not able to operate because it depends on electricity.
- San Diego International Airport advised that it has backup generation to provide safe conditions during a power outage, but passengers cannot be processed.
- The power outage impacted the pipeline that brings most gasoline and diesel fuel to the county. This did not lead to a shortage since residents couldn't access fuel because commercial gas stations need electricity to operate their gas pumps.
- ATMs and credit card machines did not have power to operate, highlighting the need for residents to have cash available in various denominations in case of an emergency.
- The medical examiner reported no deaths attributed directly to the blackout.
- SDG & E reported full power was restored to San Diego County at 3:19 a.m. September 9, 2011. The Emergency Operations Center continued to monitor restoration activities throughout the day and deactivated at 3:00 p.m. on September 9.
- Residents are urged to prepare for a blackout or other disaster by keeping flashlights and a radio with working batteries on hand, having at least one landline and a non-electric phone within the residence in the event that cell phones and cordless phones are not operable, and maintaining 72-hours worth of supplies such as food, water and cash in the event of a major disaster.
- Residents are also encouraged to prepare for any emergency by having a family disaster plan and registering for AlertSanDiego. Information and additional tips are available at [www.ReadySanDiego.org](http://www.ReadySanDiego.org).