



2021 Fitch Mountain Community Evacuation Exercise

After Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)



County of Sonoma
Department of Emergency Management

July 2021

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List of Acronyms

AAR/IP:	After-Action Report and Improvement Plan
AFN:	Access and Functional Needs
CAO:	County Administrator’s Office
CART:	Sonoma Community Animal Response Team
CERT:	Community Emergency Response Team
COPE:	Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DEM:	Department of Emergency Management
EDB:	Economic Development Board
EOP:	Emergency Operations Plan
FHA:	Fitch Mountain Homeowners Association
FPM:	Final Planning Meeting
HALTER:	Horse and Livestock Team Emergency Response
HSD:	Human Services Department
HSEEP:	Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program
ICP:	Incident Command Post
IPM:	Initial Planning Meeting
MPM:	Mid-Term Planning Meeting
NWS:	National Weather Service
PIO:	Public Information Officer
SO:	Sheriff’s Office
SoCo:	Sonoma County
TDD:	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf
TEP:	Temporary Evacuation Point
WEA:	Wireless Emergency Alert

I. Introduction

In June 2021, the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) in coordination with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office (SO) carried out two community evacuation exercises that targeted three unincorporated areas of the County. These evacuation exercises were a resumption of previously-planned exercises in identified high-risk areas of the unincorporated county that were put on hold since 2019 due to various emergency situations that impacted the County, including wildfires and COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions.

These community exercises were successfully resumed and carried out in 2021. As planned follow-up, DEM has developed an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) for these exercises in order to better assess and strengthen community and stakeholder engagement around these initiatives moving forward. The contents in these AAR/IP are based on key observations as well as community and stakeholder comments and feedbacks.

The table below shows the two evacuation exercises that were implemented on different dates and the respective communities involved.

Exercise Dates	Unincorporated Community	Location
Saturday, June 5th 2021	Fitch Mountain	Northeast County
Saturday, June 19th 2021	Camp Meeker and Occidental	West County

This AAR/IP provides a brief overview of the community evacuation exercise recently implemented in the unincorporated area of Fitch Mountain located in the North County area. It also incorporates and highlights areas for improvement as well as corrective actions for future implementation moving forward. Public access to this AAR/IP is available on: www.sonomacounty.ca.gov/DEM/Public-Reports.

Looking ahead, an envisioned goal for future evacuation exercises is to have communities from unincorporated areas of the County lead the planning process and implement these exercises themselves with county and community stakeholder support. Hence, it is imperative for the recommendations highlighted in this AAR/IP to be known and acted upon by all stakeholders.

II. Background

Since the devastating Tubbs and Nuns Fires in 2017, Sonoma County residents have come to terms with what it means to live in a wildfire-prone area. The community understands the importance of staying vigilant to potential wildfire risks and being fully prepared. In response to the 2017 Fires, the County's Department of Emergency Management (DEM) carried out an assessment of the most at-risk areas in the unincorporated County that would benefit from targeted wildfire preparedness efforts. These efforts included public education on emergency preparedness, supporting community groups with relevant resources, deeper government & community stakeholder involvement and exercising emergency scenarios with the community.

In late 2019, DEM began implementing a series of Community Evacuation Exercises targeting communities in unincorporated areas that met the following two criteria: 1) being in a high-risk wildfire area and; 2) residents facing challenge with existing limited infrastructure in the event of a real evacuation need, i.e. "one way in and one way out" road access. Initially, three community evacuation exercises were planned for October-November 2019. The unincorporated communities involved Cavedale-Trinity, Mill Creek and Fitch Mountain. Due to the Kincade Fire, only two community exercises were carried out (Cavedale-Trinity and Mill Creek) in 2019 while the remaining community exercise (Fitch Mountain) had to be postponed. Incidentally, this community was impacted by an evacuation order due to the wildfire threat.

Leaping forward, much has occurred in Sonoma County since late 2019 including multiple wildfires in 2020 and the current COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented DEM from moving forward with the planned community evacuation exercises as originally envisioned. After almost two years and as emergency response operations subsided and local COVID-19 restrictions eased, these exercises were finally resumed in mid 2021. This resumption of community evacuation exercises targeted three unincorporated communities, although two would ultimately be carried out due to planning constraints and overall timing of implementation prior to the dryer months of the year and accompanying wildfire risks. Pending unincorporated communities as well as those that have shown recent interest in County support with planning and implementation of an evacuation exercise in the near future have been included on a 2022 Community Evacuation Exercise waitlist. Currently, these communities are: Diamond A/George Ranch (Southeast County), Palomino Lakes (Northeast County), Cazadero (Northwest County) and Upper Mark West (Southeast County).

III. Exercise Overview

The following section outlines the general profile of the Fitch Mountain community evacuation exercise that took place in June, 2021. This outline is based on the Homeland Security Exercise and Evacuation Program (HSEEP) standardized template.

<i>Exercise Name</i>	Fitch Mountain Community Evacuation Exercise
<i>Exercise Date</i>	Saturday, June 5th 2021
<i>Purpose</i>	Educate, familiarize and prepare the community to better respond to a wildfire threat. To evaluate the abilities of local government and emergency response agencies to notify residents, order an evacuation and control traffic flow in an orderly manner while directing residents either away from a wildfire threat or to a designated temporary evacuation point (TEP).
<i>Scope</i>	Functional Exercise targeting the Fitch Mountain area neighborhoods of Sonoma County and borderline section of the City of Healdsburg. The exercise is limited to targeted area residents only.
<i>Mission Areas</i>	Mitigation, Protection, Response
<i>Core Capabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Resilience • Critical Transportation • Intelligence and Information Sharing • Mass Care Services • On-Scene Security, Protection and Law Enforcement Situational Assessment • Operational Communication • Operational Coordination • Planning • Public Information and Warning • Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment
<i>Objectives</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safely evacuate residents from the Fitch Mountain area to the Healdsburg Community Center via pre-identified evacuation routes 2. Familiarize residents with the local evacuation plan/routes 3. Identify and address Access and Functional Needs (AFN) 4. Exercise the Sonoma County Alert System (SoCo Alert) to notify participating residents 5. Facilitate residents signing up for notifications with SoCo Alert 6. Collect data during the exercise to enhance current wildfire evacuation plans. 7. Strengthen collaboration between participating agencies
<i>Threat/Hazard</i>	Natural Disaster – Fire. The scenario was selected based upon an increasingly dangerous hazard of wildland fires in Northern California.
<i>Scenario</i>	Incident: High temperatures, low humidity and strong winds have prompted the National Weather Service (NWS) to issue a Red Flag warning for the North Bay Area Counties. A wildfire starts on the Mayacamas Mountains near Castle Rock Springs.

	Northeasterly winds drive the fire towards the Fitch Mountain neighborhood resulting in an Evacuation Order issued by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.
<i>Sponsor</i>	County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management
<i>Participating Organizations</i>	<p>State/Federal Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CalFire • California Highway Patrol <p>County of Sonoma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management • Sonoma County Sheriff's Office • Sonoma County Regional Parks • Human Services Department • Transportation and Public Works <p>Local Agencies and Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitch Mountain Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) • Fitch Mountain Homeowners Association (FHA) • American Red Cross • City of Healdsburg Fire Department • City of Healdsburg Police Department • City of Healdsburg Community Services/Parks and Recreation
<i>Point of Contact</i>	<p>Richard Diaz Deputy Emergency Services Coordinator Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management Richard.Diaz@sonoma-county.org 707-565-3606</p>

IV. Exercise Planning Process

Planning for these community evacuation exercises required rigorous engagement and coordination with all stakeholders. DEM led these planning efforts for this evacuation exercise in such way that allowed for adequate community involvement at all levels. The following sections further describe specific areas of the planning process that were instrumental in the overall implementation of the exercises.

Identifying a “Community Champion”

Identifying community stakeholders that knew their area well and had the capacity to maintain resident engagement throughout the exercise planning process was critical to the exercise success. For the Fitch Mountain community, DEM identified the Fitch Mountain Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) organization as the community champion to help drive this effort from start to finish. The Fitch Mountain COPE is part of the wider North Sonoma County COPE network and they have been heavily involved in community preparedness within neighborhood groups, including the Fitch Mountain Homeowners Association and government partners from the City of Healdsburg. Additionally, DEM has established good relationship with the Fitch Mountain COPE as a result of ongoing mutual community preparedness efforts which include the development of awareness videos, development of preparedness materials and mitigation plans. The Fitch Mountain COPE was also initially engaged in the community evacuation exercise planned in 2019 and which had to be postponed.

This organization’s involvement in the community evacuation planning process has given them a unique perspective on what is required to deliver these types of exercise and has positioned them to lead planning efforts for future evacuation in their respective communities.

Planning Team Meetings

As with every exercise type, planning is critical for a successful implementation. For these particular community evacuation exercises, which involved an array of stakeholders and partners, several planning meetings were required. Following guidance from the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), a Planning Team was created to steer the planning efforts required for this evacuation exercise. This Planning Team was comprised of representatives of the identified community champion, community leaders, local public safety entities and County Departments (primarily DEM, Sheriff’s Office and County Administrator’s Office). Additionally, three main planning meetings were scheduled over a three-month period: Initial Planning Meeting (IPM), Mid-Term Planning Meeting (MPM) and a Final Planning Meeting (FPM). Due to the local and state COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, these planning meetings were held virtually over the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Every exercise planning meeting was facilitated by DEM. These planning meetings fostered stakeholder discussions within the Planning Team around defined exercise objectives, exercise scenario development, exercise implementation date and time, key implementing and supporting players, resources needed and overall status updates. They also served as a platform to relay important feedback and suggestions on where to modify processes and carry out additional side meetings that were deemed important, such as public safety discussions which required a more internal level of conversation.

The following is a brief overview of the key elements that were addressed during each of the Planning Team meetings and when they were held:

Initial Planning Meeting (IPM) – March 25, 2021

- Define exercise objectives
- Define coordination team
- Assign roles and responsibilities
- Develop exercise scenario and draft exercise plan (ExPlan)
- Agree on exercise date, time, duration and location(s)

Mid-Term Planning Meeting (MPM) – May 6, 2021

- IPM meeting minutes and follow-up
- Discuss scenario timeline
- Review draft exercise plan (ExPlan)
- Assign additional responsibilities

Final Planning Meeting (FPM) – May 20, 2021

- Comprehensive final review
- Approve exercise plan (ExPlan)
- Review logistical activities
- Resolve open planning issues and address last-minute concerns

Documentation

Given the importance of these planning meetings, specific attention was given to documenting information.

As facilitators of every Planning Team meeting, DEM maintained a system of documentation that would aid the whole planning process. Materials developed, shared and discussed among the Planning Team members for both exercises were documented in internal DEM systems.

Meeting agendas, meeting minutes and Zoom call recordings were documented and shared when available. This allowed for immediate follow-up on urgent matters, kept momentum in the planning process and also showed community stakeholders the County's commitment to carrying out an important activity in high-risk communities.

Resource and staffing

DEM assigned one staff member to coordinate the planning process for this community evacuation exercise by working closely with the identified community champion. The assigned DEM staff was the County's face to the Planning Team and to the target community in terms of coordination and engagement. Two-way communications were channelled through the DEM representative, including the facilitation and acquisition of resources in concert with other stakeholders.

The Fitch Mountain COPE also designated leaders and dedicated resources to support the planning process. For this exercise, the Fitch Mountain COPE utilized their already-existing networking platforms to enhance community awareness about the upcoming evacuation exercises. Their ability to connect with local residents via online newsletters, i.e. Fitch Mountain Homeowners Association mailing lists and other group texting apps, put the evacuation exercise on the spotlight early on, prompting increased interest from the community.

County Inter-Departmental Coordination

Although this was a DEM-led initiative in concert with the Sheriff’s Office and the County Administrator’s Office, the community evacuation exercises required the involvement and coordination of multiple other County Departments given the overlapping areas of engagement in an emergency response setting.

In a real evacuation situation, it is the Sheriff’s Office who has the authority to order residents in unincorporated areas to evacuate. With this comes a myriad of protocols and procedures that the County puts in place as per its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which requires the engagement of multiple County Departments. On this note, DEM brought together the County Departments that needed to be part of the planning process to not only take an active role, but also to assess and improve their own procedures for this type of evacuations.

The following is a summary of the County Departments that were involved in the evacuation exercise planning process and implementation. The table details a County Department’s normal role during a real emergency and their associated engagement in this exercise:

Department	Normal Role and Purpose of Exercise Involvement
DEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead county entity that directs emergency preparedness and response operations • In charge of the overall evacuation exercise coordination and delivery • Delivers and tests the Alert & Warning notifications on evacuation exercise day via the SoCo Alert platform • Facilitates distribution of county preparedness materials during exercise day
Sheriff’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County entity that authorizes evacuation warnings and orders in real emergency situations • Alerts residents in evacuation exercise perimeter via ground patrolling and Hi-Lo sirens • Supports community preparedness aware during the Resource Fair
County Administrator’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees county operations in unincorporated areas • Engages county communications/Public Information Office (PIO) to support exercise planning efforts and external relations during evacuation exercise day, i.e. media, public information, elective officials
Regional Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage county parks and recreational areas and have emergency protocols in place to facilitate regional park resources during real emergency situations • Provides traffic control at the Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) within evacuation exercise perimeter
Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages shelters and TEPs during real emergency evacuation situations • Manages and tests the simulated TEP during evacuation exercise day
Transportation and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage county roads and maintenance • Supports overall exercise with road signage and permitting

External/Operational Area Partners

As with County Departments, several partners mainly from within the Operational Area had an interest in partaking in these exercises given their direct involvement in community preparedness and response operations during a real emergency. Similar to the previous section, the following table illustrates those partners from within the Operational Area who took part in the evacuation exercises and were heavily involved in either Planning Team or side meetings.

Agency/Organization	Normal Role and Purpose of Exercise Involvement
City of Healdsburg Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety government entity Supported exercise logistics, community awareness and public safety coordination within City jurisdiction
City of Healdsburg Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety government entity Supported exercise logistics, community awareness and public safety coordination within City jurisdiction
City of Healdsburg Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages City of Healdsburg facilities, including the Healdsburg Community Center Supported exercise logistics with venue arrangements and Resource Fair setup
Fitch Mountain COPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in community preparedness awareness Part of the Planning Team that helped steer the exercise planning process Participated in the Resource Fair providing COPE information materials to attendees
American Red Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in shelter response operations during real emergencies Participated in the Resource Fair providing information materials to attendees
Horse and Livestock Team Emergency Response (HALTER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in animal shelter response operations Participated in the Resource Fair providing animal evacuation information materials to attendees
Sonoma Community Animal Response Team (CART)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in animal shelter response operations Participated in the Resource Fair providing animal evacuation information materials to attendees
North Bay Animal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in animal shelter response operations Participated in the Resource Fair providing animal evacuation information materials to attendees
North Sonoma County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic partner in organizing volunteer/CERT members in assisting during emergency operations

Setup of Emergency Notification Alert (SoCo Alert)

SoCo Alert is the County’s public safety emergency notification system which is managed by DEM under the Alert & Warning Program. The SoCo Alert emergency notification capabilities include reaching registered community residents via email, text message and audio via calls to a cell phone or landline. It also employs Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) if needed as well as Spanish language messaging. For community evacuation exercises, this is the main notification system that is used and determines the official start of the exercise with an initial SoCo Alert launch.

Planning for a SoCo Alert launch in this evacuation exercise was led by DEM and supported by the Planning Team. In order for community residents to take full advantage of the evacuation exercise protocols, they were required to register in order to receive a SoCo Alert, which would in turn simulate a real-life evacuation notification from the Sheriff’s Office and prompt residents to leave their homes and proceed

to a specified location. With the support of the CAO, DEM facilitated the registration process online via a county-managed exercise-specific website and via postcards that were mailed to all USPS-registered addresses in Fitch Mountain. Additionally, the county partnered with 2-1-1 to assist those residents with limited computer access and computer knowledge via the phone.

An online and phone registration period was established and closed 48 hours prior to exercise day. This gave DEM enough time to collect all registration data and make preparations for the corresponding written and audio messages that would go out in both, English and Spanish.

High-level Representation

Preparedness planning with and for the community requires a Whole of Community approach and that includes ensuring high-level figures are part of the process. Under HSEEP guidelines, elected officials are involved in the early stages of the planning process as they need to understand and be in agreement with the scope and overall objective of the exercise to be carried out in a given jurisdiction. For this evacuation exercise, DEM made sure to engage and keep informed not only heads of county and partner organization stakeholders but also elective officials representing the targeted community. Fitch Mountain is located in Northeast County and therefore represented under Supervisorial District 4.

The District 4 Supervisor was formally invited to attend the evacuation exercise for Fitch Mountain. This was an opportunity to also engage with community participants and the exercise planning team. A brief public address from the Supervisor and various County and City leadership members was organized as part of the day's agenda. Planning for such public engagement from leaders reassured the community that the county and many other partners take community safety seriously, that they understand the threats posed by wildfires and that they are committed to helping them be informed and know what to do during an emergency situation.

Community Preparedness Outreach: Resource Fair

An important additional element in this exercise was ensuring participants not only learned from the experience of gathering essential items, evacuating their homes and driving to a designated TEP, but also to have access to community preparedness resources and information prior to leaving this event. For this purpose, the Planning Team considered ideal having a Resource Fair where participants would have the opportunity to interact with various community preparedness organizations and learn more about their capabilities and resources made available to the community ahead of a real evacuation scenario.

In a designated open space and with COVID-19 precautionary measures in place, the Resource Fair was made possible thanks to the support from the City of Healdsburg Community Services Department as well as partner organizations including North Sonoma County COPE, North Sonoma County CERT, HALTER, North Bay Animal Services and Sonoma CART. The latter three organizations specialize in animal evacuation and operate throughout the county.

V. Exercise Implementation – Key Findings

Planning for the Fitch Mountain community evacuation exercise required an extensive time commitment for organization and engagement in order to ensure successful implementation. In this latter phase, all the moving pieces are observed at play and their performance documented for evaluation and correction towards future related planning cycles.

The following key findings were based on observations and feedback obtained from participating community members, planning team members and agencies/organizations supporting the exercise. They have also been categorized into two groups for better analysis: Internal Partner Evaluation and General Participant Evaluation.

Internal Partner Evaluation

Shortly after the exercise, an internal partner evaluation was done through a “hotwash” session. This made sure that fresh feedback was captured from those that were involved in the operational front of the exercise. Under HSEEP protocols, these are considered to be exercise evaluators and observers.

Public Safety Coordination

Core Capability: On-Scene Security, Protection and Law Enforcement Situational Assessment

Key Findings:

1. A Hi-Lo siren from one of the Sheriff Deputy’s vehicle went off before the official launch of the exercise notification (SoCo Alert), creating a minor confusion among a few in the Incident Command Post who ultimately realized the Hi-Lo siren was activated a bit too early.

Core Capability: Public Information and Warning

Key Findings:

2. DEM successfully launched the SoCo Alert, however, some participants did not receive it¹.
3. There is poor cell phone service in Fitch Mountain due to its location.

Core Capability: Operational Coordination

Key Findings:

4. The Incident Command Post (ICP) was appropriately setup and the morning pre-exercise briefing and post-exercise hotwash were carried out here. However, its functionality could be improved by having a better structure for monitoring incoming vehicles arriving at the TEP and better designation of tasks/things to monitor.

Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) Operations

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

¹ See Graphic 1 in Appendix A

Key Findings:

5. Incoming flow of vehicles at the TEP happened quickly and therefore, the check-in process should only take a small amount of time in vehicles through.
6. An additional pass-thru lane would make things easier for those who would prefer to go straight to the parking area, i.e. evacuating trailers, etc.
7. Staff supporting traffic control stated that traffic backed up to Healdsburg Ave. at one point.
8. More signs and cones were needed to better direct vehicles, particularly in the main entrance.
9. Once parked, some participants had to walk directly through areas where other vehicles were operating/being parked, causing a safety concern.

Community Preparedness Resource Fair

Core Capability: Community Resilience

Key Findings:

10. Once parked, some participants had to walk a long distance to get to the Resource Fair.
11. People should be reminded that the Healdsburg Community Center is not the default location to go during a real evacuation.

Core Capability: Planning

Key Findings:

12. The timeline of events was slightly modified to accommodate for the speed at which scheduled activities were taking place, however, this generated slight confusion among a few participants.
13. Several participants arrived at 10am once things were closing down, mentioning that the exercise was announced to end at 11am.

General Participant Evaluation

Exercise participants provided DEM with feedback on their experience by way of responding to an exercise survey/feedback form both in print and online via Survey Monkey. Additionally, key observations were documented from an exercise debrief conducted between DEM and Fitch Mountain COPE leaders a few days after the exercise. Below are the critical observations documented from the participants.

Access and Functional Needs

Core Capability: Critical Transportation

Key Findings:

14. It is assumed that not many residents with disabilities/special needs participated in the exercise and there needs to be a clear understanding of how many residents in this category reside in the area and will require transportation²

Core Capability: Public Information and Warning

² See Graphic 6 in Appendix A

Key Findings:

15. The hearing impaired will have issues hearing any of the audible alerts (Hi-Lo sirens, phone ring, etc.); it was unclear as to what is in place for residents with this disability.

Public Safety Coordination

Core Capability: Public Information and Warning

Key Findings:

16. Several residents stated that they could not hear the Hi-Lo sirens when activated during the onset of the exercise.
17. Several residents also stated that the SoCo Alert voice message was not clear/understandable and therefore relied on either the text messages or other notifications received.
18. Many expected the SoCo Alert to be as loud as a WEA but it wasn't.
19. Registration on the SoCo Alert platform is not really setup in such way that encourages those who do not use cell phones to actually get registered.
20. Many that did not register for the exercise still participated on the actual event.

Core Capability: On-Scene Security, Protection and Law Enforcement

Key Findings:

21. Sheriff Deputy patrol vehicles were not seen in the inner roads off of N. Fitch Mountain Rd. and S. Fitch Mountain Rd (Madrone Ave., for instance). It is critical to also go into these roads to alert the residents who reside along that perimeter.
22. In a real-life event, traffic control would be a concern. The Fitch Mountain COPE leaders can benefit from training in order to support traffic control, if needed.

Exercise Planning

Core Capability: Planning

Key Findings:

23. Exercise footprint was not clear to many; it needs to be better defined for future exercises.
24. After a long week of work, some residents did not participate due to how early the exercise was scheduled to commence; it is suggested that future exercises begin later than 8:00am.
25. In terms of the frequency of having these evacuation exercises, it is suggested to have them at least once a year as it would allow for residents to become more familiar with evacuation protocols.
26. Perhaps more community residents would be encouraged to participate in future exercises if there is an incentive for doing so, i.e. free goodies if one shows up with a Go-Bag or maybe negotiate a utility bill deduction for those that do take part as a mandatory practice.

Community Preparedness Resource Fair

Core Capability: Community Resilience

Key Findings:

27. Participants stated that more effort should be put into letting people know that a Resource Fair will be taking place as part of the exercise.

Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) Operations

Core Capability: Mass Care Services

Key Findings:

28. Would be useful to start thinking about a “South of Town” TEP location; the current PG&E staging area, the Golf course and Healdsburg High School are three locations that could be explored.
29. TEP entry needs to better account for a larger influx of vehicles.

VI. Improvement Plan

The following is a proposed Improvement Plan based on the key findings captured in the previous section. This Improvement Plan is intended to follow up with the challenges encountered and shared by both, the Planning Team and the general participants who that took part in this exercise. It also incorporates corrective actions that will improve future implementation of these types of community evacuation exercises.

The matrix below has been adapted from the HSEEP guidance template for displaying challenges and corrective actions as well as proposed dates of completion.

Capability	Exercise Component	Issue/Challenge	Corrective Action	Responsible Entity/Org.	Completion Date
On-Scene Security, Protection and Law Enforcement Situational Assessment	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Hi-Lo siren from one of the Sheriff Deputy's vehicle went off before the official launch of the exercise SoCo Alert 	All patrol staff already in the field are to take part in the pre-exercise briefing at the Incident Command Post (ICP), at least via phone/radio in order to be on the same page regarding exercise start time	DEM, Sheriff's Office	Jan 2022
	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheriff patrol vehicles were not seen in the inner roads off of N. Fitch Mountain Rd. and S. Fitch Mountain Rd (Madrone Ave., for instance). It is considered critical to go into these roads to alert the residents who reside along that perimeter 	Sheriff's Office and Regional Parks to assess the feasibility of having Sheriff Deputy vehicles or Hi-Lo enabled Regional Parks vehicles patrol inlet roads	Sheriff's Office, Regional Parks	Jan 2022
	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a real-life event, traffic control would be a concern. The Fitch Mountain COPE leaders can benefit from training in order to support traffic control, if needed 	Fitch Mountain COPE leaders to connect with the North Sonoma County CERT program manager (Geoff Peters) for traffic control training opportunities	DEM, Fitch Mountain COPE	Sept 2021
Public Information and Warning	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEM successfully launched the SoCo Alert; however, a few people did not receive it 	Some participants DID NOT register for the exercise and therefore did not receive it ³ . Improve pre-exercise communications to help residents understand they need to register	DEM	Aug 2021
	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is poor cell phone service in Fitch Mountain due to its location 	Analysis of cell phone coverage in the Fitch Mountain community to be carried out and assessed	DEM, Economic Development Board (EDB)	Sept 2021
	Access and Functional Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hearing impaired should not have issues hearing any of the audible alerts (Hi-Lo sirens, etc.), it was unclear as to what is in place for residents with this disability 	Use of SoCo Alert Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) feature to be utilized in future evacuation exercises	DEM	Jan 2022

³ See Graphic 2 in Appendix A

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Capability	Exercise Component	Issue/Challenge	Corrective Action	Responsible Entity/Org.	Completion Date
Operational Coordination; Planning	Public Safety Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Incident Command Post (ICP) was appropriately setup and the morning pre-exercise briefing and post-exercise hotwash were delivered here. However, its functionality could be improved by having a better structure for monitoring and keeping track of vehicles arriving at the TEP and better designation of tasks/things to monitor. 	Have a better planned structure, preferably ICS-based functionality for operating out of the ICP throughout the exercise.	DEM, Planning Team	Jan 2022
Mass Care Services	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEP check-in can only take a small amount of time in getting people through 	Ensure revisions to vehicle traffic protocols are made to current TEP operations plans	HSD	Sept 2021
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional pass-thru lane would make things easier for those who would prefer to go straight to the parking area, i.e. evacuating trailers, etc. 	Ensure revisions to vehicle traffic protocols are made to current TEP operations plans	HSD	Sept 2021
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEP entry needs to better account for a large influx of vehicles 	Ensure revisions to vehicle traffic protocols are made to current TEP operations plans	HSD	Sept 2021
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic backed up to Healdsburg Ave. at one point 	Ensure better planning on traffic flow into evacuation venue/TEP in future exercises	DEM, HSD, Regional Parks	Jan 2022
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More signs and cones were needed to better direct vehicles, particularly in the main entrance 	Ensure the right number of signs and cones are appropriately visible in future exercises	DEM	Jan 2022
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once parked, some participants had to walk directly through areas where other vehicles were operating/being parked, causing a safety concern 	Ensure better assessment of safety issues when planning for vehicle parking and arrival at TEP locations in future exercises	DEM, Regional Parks	Jan 2022
	TEP Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be useful to start thinking about a "South of Town" TEP location; the current PG&E staging area, the Golf course and Healdsburg High School are three locations that could be explored. 	Potential TEP locations in the area to be further assessed and communicated	HSD	Jan 2022
Community Resilience	Resource Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants stated that more effort should be put into letting people know that a Resource Fair will be taking place as part of the exercise 	Ensure broader communication and marketing of Resource Fair events in future exercises	DEM, CAO	Jan 2022
	Resource Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People should be reminded that the Healdsburg Community Center is not the default location to go during a real evacuation 	Strengthen public communication on what a TEP is and that operations at designated locations will be informed depending on the specific emergency circumstances	DEM, HSD	Oct 2021

2021 Fitch Mountain Community Evacuation Exercise
After Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

Capability	Exercise Component	Issue/Challenge	Corrective Action	Responsible Entity/Org.	Completion Date
Planning	Resource Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timeline of events was slightly deviated to accommodate speed of people flow and interactions, which was appreciated by most but did generate a little confusion among a couple of participants 	Ensure better planning is done around future Resource Fair start and ending times	DEM, CAO	Jan 2022
	Resource Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several participants arrived at 10am once things were closing down, mentioning that the exercise was announced to end at 11am 	Ensure better planning and communication on exercise start/end times and flexibility for any change in schedule	DEM, CAO	Jan 2022
Planning	Resource Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once parked, some participants had to walk a long distance to get to the Resource Fair 	Ensure better planning for parking areas in future exercises	DEM, Regional parks	Jan 2022
	Exercise Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise footprint was not clear to many; it needs to be better defined for future exercises 	Ensure a clearer exercise foot print is designed	DEM	
	Exercise Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After a long week of work, some residents did not participate due to how early the exercise was scheduled to commence; it is suggested for future exercises to begin later than 8:00am 	Define a more convenient exercise start time that is after 8:00am, allowing for more people to participate to partake in the event	DEM	Jan 2022
	Exercise Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of the frequency of having these evacuation exercises, it is suggested to have them at least once a year as it would allow for residents to become more familiar with evacuation protocols 	“Community Champions” to ensure exercises define/ensure that future community exercises are carried out at least once a year, supported by DEM and Sheriff’s Office	Community Champions DEM, Sheriff’s Office	Jan 2022
	Exercise Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perhaps more community residents would be encouraged to participate in future exercises if there is an incentive for doing so, i.e. free goodies if one shows up with a Go-Bag or maybe negotiate a utility bill deduction for those that do take part as a mandatory practice 	“Community Champions” to determine appropriate incentives that would encourage residents to partake in future exercises	Community Champions	Jan 2022
Critical Transportation	Access and Functional Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is assumed that not many residents with disabilities/special needs participated in the exercise and there needs to be a clear understanding of how many residents in this category reside in the area and that will require transportation 	Assess the number of potential residents that have some type of Access and Functional Needs and that would also require evacuation assistance (transportation, etc.)	Fitch Mountain COPE, DEM	Jan 2022

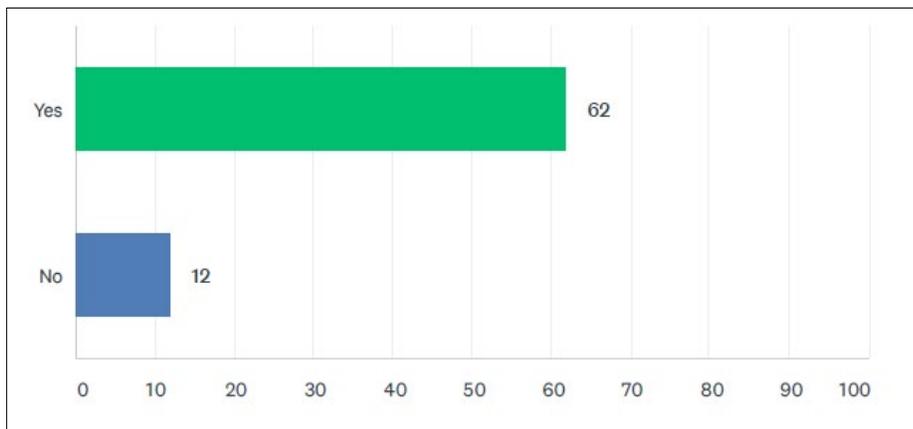
Appendix A: Relevant Survey Results Graphics

A total of 80 responses were received for the exercise surveys. 60 of them were completed online via Survey Monkey and 20 were completed in paper copy on the day of the event. For reporting purposes, the paper copy responses were later incorporated into the online survey in order to have a more representative illustration of the overall results.

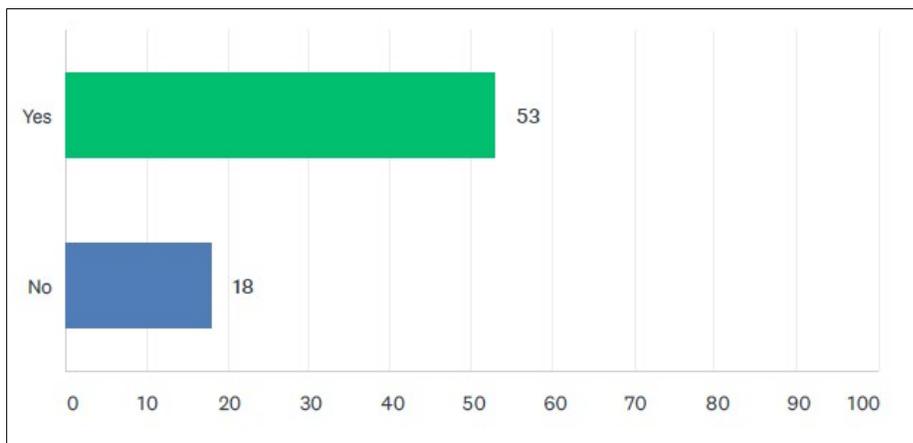
The following are snapshots of the relevant graphics produced by Survey Monkey. A detailed version of the survey results has been shared with the Fitch Mountain COPE for reference towards future community-led exercise planning.

Exercise Emergency Notification (SoCo Alert)

Graphic 1: Did you receive a SoCo Alert?



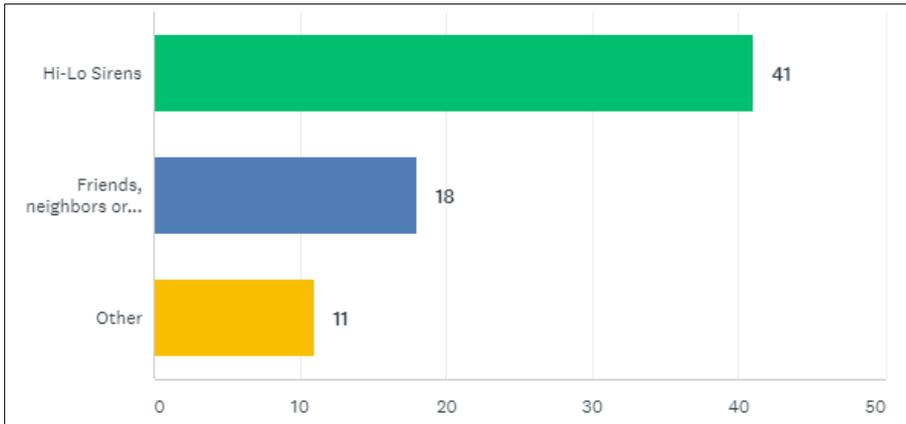
Graphic 2: Did you pre-register for the exercise?



Note:

Despite 12 participants mentioning they did not receive a SoCo Alert for this exercise (Graphic 1), further analysis showed that a total of 18 participants effectively had not pre-registered for the exercise (Graphic 2) and therefore could have not received the SoCo Alert.

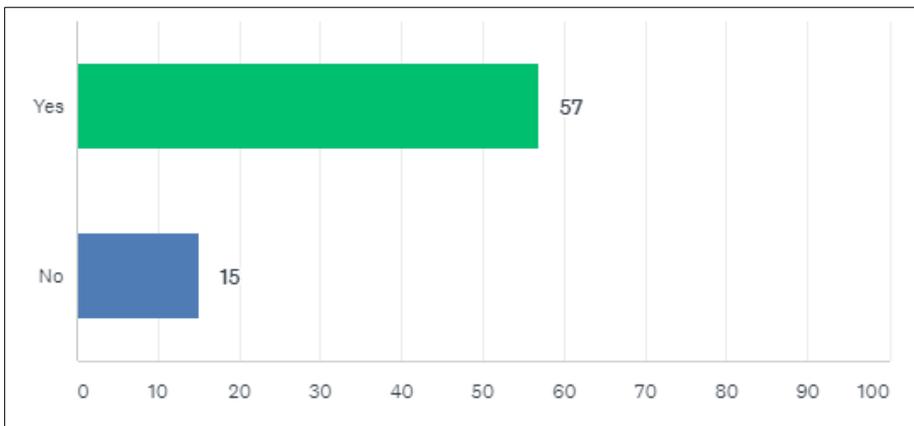
Graphic 3: What other alerts did you get or hear during the exercise?



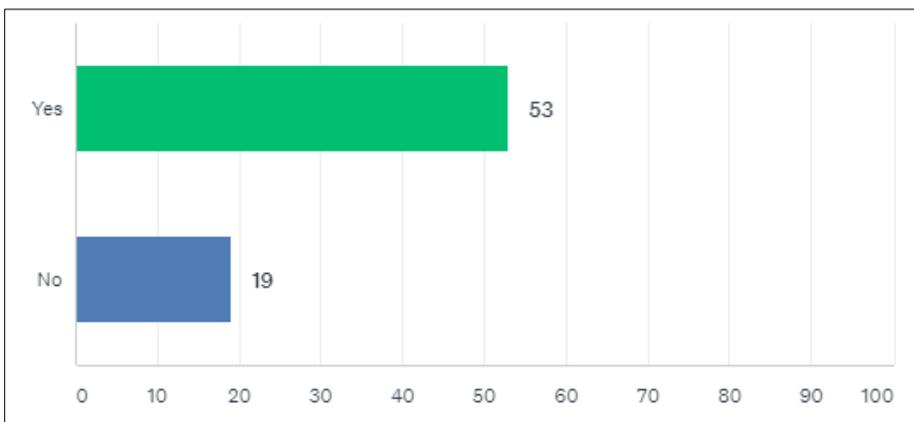
Note:
Other notification alerts mentioned were: email, text messages, Nixle from City of Healdsburg.

Evacuation Readiness

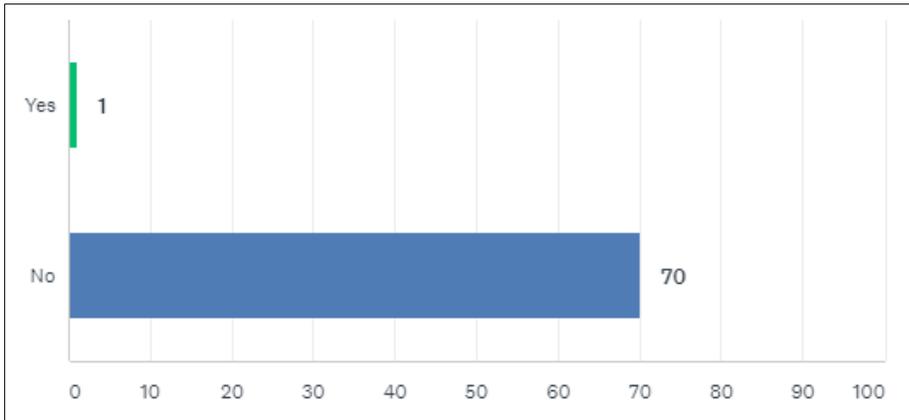
Graphic 4: Do you have a “Go Bag” ready for evacuation?



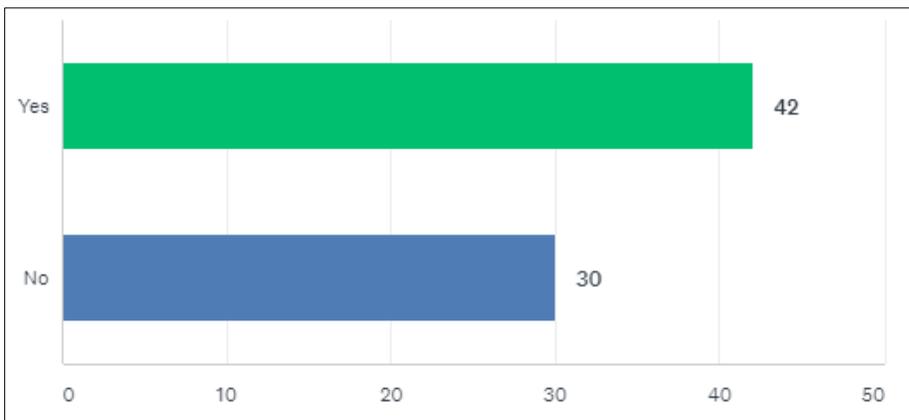
Graphic 5: Do you have an Evacuation Tag from the Sheriff’s Office?



Graphic 6: Will you require transportation assistance to evacuate from your community?



Graphic 7: Do you have pets in your home that would require evacuation?

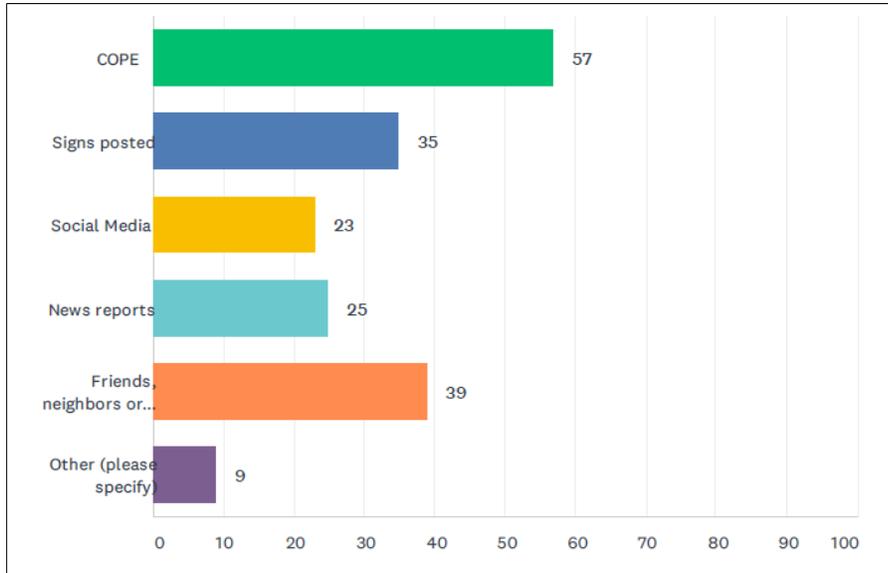


Graphic 8: In a real emergency, where would your planned destination be?

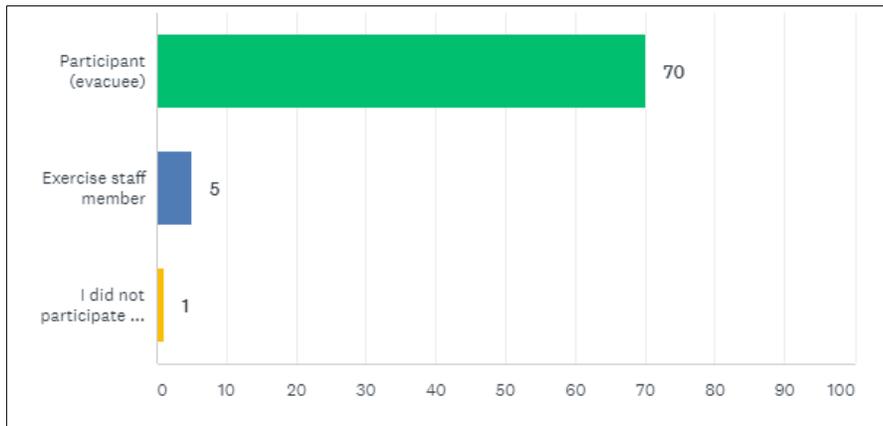


Overall Exercise Participation

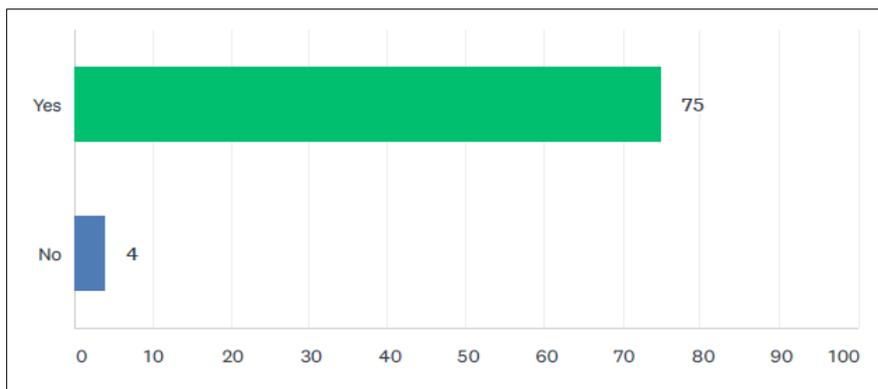
Graphic 9: How did you hear about this exercise?



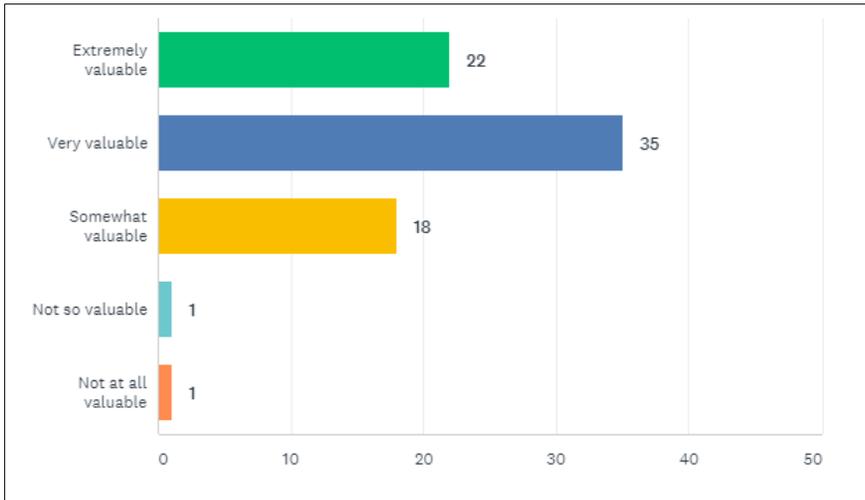
Graphic 10: What was your role in this exercise?



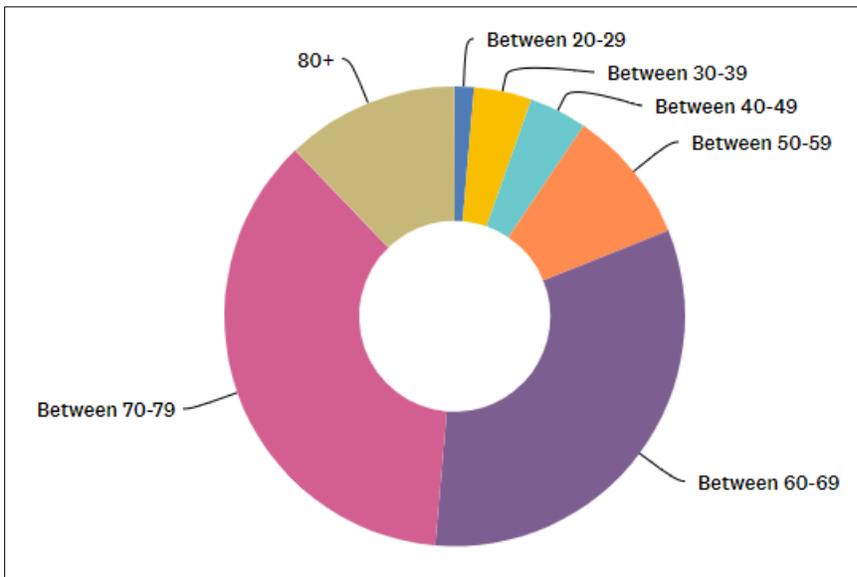
Graphic 11: Would you participate in this type of exercise again?



Graphic 12: How would you rate the value of the Fitch Mountain Evacuation Exercise?



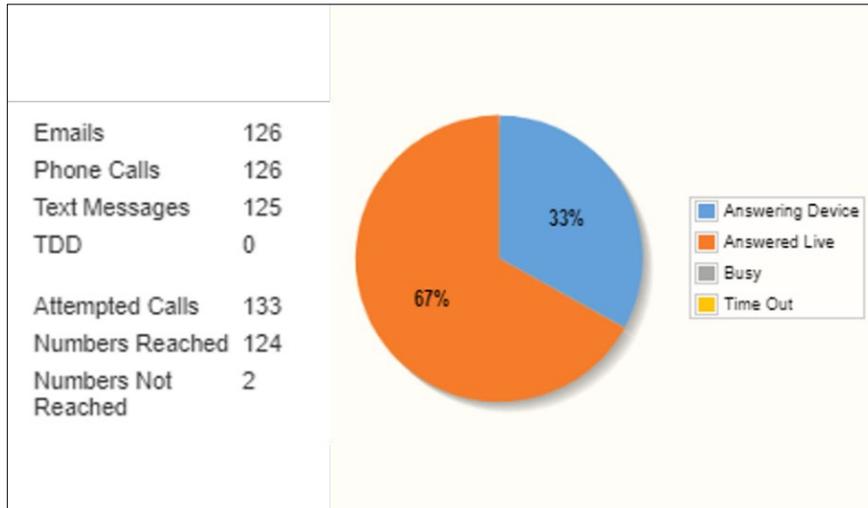
Graphic 13: Please indicate your age



Appendix B: Relevant Emergency Alert Graphics

The following graphics were imported from the SoCo Alert platform (CodeRed) and they provide a summary of the connection status related to the SoCo Alert launch during the evacuation exercise.

Graphic 14: SoCo Alert Connection Rate



Graphic 15: Call Success Report

Total Data		
Active Delivery		
Disposition	Count	Active Percentage
Answering Device	41	33.10 %
Answered Live	83	66.90 %
	124	100.00 %
Active Connect		
Disposition	Count	Active Percentage
Busy	0	0.00 %
Timed Out	0	0.00 %
	0	0.00 %
Summary		
Total Active	124	