

Policy Regarding Sandbags County of Humboldt

Purpose

This will establish policies and procedures for the use of sand and sandbags for public infrastructure protection during a declared disaster or emergency. This also establishes policies and procedures for specific instances where public stocks of sand and/or sandbags can be provided for private property protection efforts.

Scope

This policy applies to all County Departments, without exception.

Policy

For normal operations and for annual preparedness efforts, on-hand stocks of sand and sandbags under County control are intended for public infrastructure protection only. The Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff) or the Board of Supervisors may, upon a “Declaration of a Local Emergency in Humboldt County”, and/or during any period in which an imminent threat of extreme wide-area flooding is identified for specific locations, take action to provide available sand and/or sandbags to the residents of the unincorporated areas of the County. Any public assistance to private persons will be based on the need to mitigate the immediate effects of the emergency or disaster, will be limited to stocks not needed for public infrastructure protection, and will terminate upon cessation of the immediate threat.

Outreach Support

The Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff) and the Board of Supervisors will support public outreach actions to inform the residents of the unincorporated areas of the County of this policy and other flood-planning mitigation programs. The outreach actions will stress planning and self-reliance by individual citizens. It is important that property owners and residents prepare in advance and take the steps necessary to protect their personal property. Outreach actions can include issuing Public Safety Announcements, providing printed material stressing preparedness and proper flood fighting actions for private citizens, planning for the implementation of this policy, and partnering efforts with other governmental agencies and private organizations. A current listing of area sand and sandbag suppliers will be promulgated to the public as part of the outreach effort. That listing will be updated annually by Public Works personnel and appended to this document at its annual review.

General Procedures

During a declared emergency and at the discretion of the Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff) or the Board of Supervisors, sand and/or sandbags, in excess of that which is needed for protection of public assets and for public safety, may be provided to the general public for emergency use. The provision of sand and/or

sandbags will be terminated upon cessation of the immediate threat created by the declared emergency or disaster. Sand and/or sandbags will be provided from available County stocks and distributed at predetermined locations. During imminent emergency events and when approved by the Director of Emergency Service or the Board of Supervisors, sand and/or sandbags may be provided to the citizens of the unincorporated areas of the County subject to any restrictions placed by the order and limited to the availability of stocks on hand.

Specific Procedures – Annual Preparedness Actions and Normal Operations

The Board of Supervisors, as part of the County of Humboldt annual budget process, will review the provisions of this policy and determine the funding which will be provided for sand and/or sandbag procurement. Sufficient stocks of sand and/or sandbags will be procured by the Department of Public Works prior to the winter months to handle their expected use by the County for public infrastructure protection during declared emergency flooding events.

Specific Procedures – Disaster, State of Emergency Determination

When a state of emergency has been declared for Humboldt County by the Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff) or by the Board of Supervisors, the County may provide sand and/or sandbags from available County stocks to citizens of the unincorporated areas of the County if it is determined by the Sheriff, in consultation with the Director of Public Works, that there is excess stock beyond that which is necessary for the protection of public assets. Specific locations and procedures for sand and sandbag acquisition will be promulgated to the public at that time.

Specific Procedures – Long-term Planning by County Government

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors have recognized the need to have sufficient stocks of sand and sandbags available for public infrastructure protection and, when possible, to assist the citizens residing in the unincorporated areas of the County. As the procurement of sand and sandbags is difficult, if not impossible, during the times of their greatest need, sufficient planning and resources should be expended to have those needed items on hand prior to the emergency event. It should be the goal of the County to have at least 100,000 sand bags on hand for public infrastructure protection prior to each winter season. Sandbags needed for private property protection could be accessed from those stocks if it is determined that the entire stock is not necessary for protection of public assets.

Note: This Policy was adopted on January 20, 2004, by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.