



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Quality, Excellence, Innovation

Raul M. Rojas
DIRECTOR

September 9, 2015

Administration
PO Box 4186
San Rafael, CA 94913-4186
415 473 6528 T
415 473 3799 F
415 473 3232 TTY
CRS Dial 711
www.marincounty.org/pw

TO: MERA Executive Board

FROM: Craig Tackabery, Operations Officer

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM C-2: DISCUSSION OF NEED FOR END-USER TRAINING POLICY

Recommended Action: Provide direction.

Accounting

Airport

Building Maintenance

Capital Projects

Certified Unified Program
Agency (CUPA)

Communications Maintenance

County Garage

Disability Access

Engineering & Survey

Flood Control &
Water Resources

Land Development

Purchasing

Real Estate

Reprographic Services

Road Maintenance

Stormwater Program

Transportation &
Traffic Operations

Waste Management

Background: In November of 2013 a subcommittee of the MERA Operational Issues Working Group was established to review MERA training material. The group assembled included representatives from Law Enforcement, Dispatch, and Fire. The focus of the subcommittee was to review the End-User, Dispatch, and Manager Supervisor training material. The overall goal was to review the training materials for accuracy and to assure that content reflects current use of the system. The subcommittee reviewed all material making needed corrections and bringing the material up to date to reflect current operational procedures.

The process of updating is complete and all material was uploaded to a newly created training page on the MERA website. The page is password protected and allows the material to be accessed by all MERA Trainers. A benefit to this is that persons providing training will have access to current, up to date training material.

The next phase of the subcommittee work was to confirm the list of trained trainers. It was found that the existing list of trained trainers was outdated, many personnel had retired and replacements were needed. Contacts were made to agencies asking for replacement training personnel. A new list of personnel from participating county agencies was compiled.

After the new list of trainers had been compiled, Train the Trainer classes were scheduled. Two classes were held in May of 2015. The classes were to cover material from all three levels of MERA training. The first class was held at the Marin County Sheriff's Emergency Operations Facility and hosted 22 students. The second class was held at the Central Marin Police Department Training Room and hosted 15 students.

It has been about 6 years since any formal, large group MERA training has been delivered. In the recent classes during the delivery of training material, instructor and student interaction made it apparent that there has been a decline in training over the recent years. Through this, the subcommittee recognized that participating MERA agencies should be providing the complete End-User training to all new employees that have duties requiring them to use the MERA System. Since implementation of the MERA System and after the storms of 2008, the large End-User classes are no longer being taught as a MERA JPA initiative. This responsibility for new employees has been delegated to each agency's MERA training representatives and to be taught on a one on one or a small group basis.

Members of the subcommittee that have been working on updating the training material have offered to hold two countywide End-User classes. These classes could accommodate up to 30 students each and would facilitate the opportunity for the new trainers to shadow a class. The timing of these classes before the winter storms and holidays is preferred – October/November 2015. It was also agreed that having this round of training would provide a good foundation as MERA begins Next Gen system preparation.

The subcommittee also recognizes that there is a definite need to provide the Manager/Supervisor training. In the time period since the last class offering there have been many promotions of personnel into positions that would benefit from a Manager/Supervisor class offering. The subcommittee is prepared to offer two classes in early 2016. The classes would be taught in a slightly new format to include hands on applications through tabletop scenarios. The subcommittee feels that giving students more hands on opportunities would build a better level of comfort using the system at a more complex level. This class will require at least three trainers: one each from Fire, Law and Dispatch disciplines.

Instructors for the above described classes, two End-User to be held October/November 2015 and two Manager/Supervisor in early 2016, will be paid for under the County Technical Services Agreement training budget.

After a historical review, the subcommittee found that MERA does not have a written policy in place regarding End-User Training requirements. The subcommittee reviewed the MERA Mutual Aid Communications Plan, and found it does not clearly state the responsibilities surrounding training at the different levels. The subcommittee discussed the pros and cons of having a specific policy/guideline concerning training. Issues identified included:

1. A separate policy document gives standing and helps with the priority they are trying to achieve.
2. Should a policy specifically mandate training requirements especially for new/first time users?
3. Should there be a certificate of completion given to the students or at minimum a well-defined process for the class roster retention.
4. Should each agency have a trained trainer on staff?