

After Action Report

2023 Cupertino Fireworks Public Service Event

Description: 2023 Cupertino Fireworks Public Service Event
Event Type: Cupertino Citizens Corp
Event Name: 2023 Cupertino Fireworks
Activation No: CUP-23-27T
Managing Entity: Cupertino ARES
Event Date: 4 July 2023
Report Date: 24 July 2023
Report Revision: v1
Submitted by: J. Halchin

Overview of the Event

Cupertino's July 4 Fireworks is an annual event run by the Cupertino Parks and Recreation Department. Other organizations that contribute include Cupertino Public Works Department, Santa Clara County Fire Department, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, and Cupertino Citizen Corps (under the Cupertino Office of Emergency Management). Citizen Corps includes the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), and Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES). The event volunteers also included some additional amateur radio operators and CERTs from across the county.

The primary role of the volunteers is to help maintain the safety of the public and to provide situational awareness as needed. An additional goal this year was to provide periodic estimates of the number of spectators at each of the three viewing locations.

The public can watch the show from three separate locations: Creekside Park, Sedgewick School, and Miller Avenue. A team of volunteers is stationed at each location. These include an MRC-staffed first aid station and CERT and radio operators who walk around the viewing location, watching for any problems.

To begin, all the volunteers meet together for briefings in the Hyde Middle School gym and then walk to their assigned locations. Two net controllers and a shift supervisor remain at Hyde throughout the event. This year, due a last-minute illness, the city's Volunteer Coordinator (a city employee) served as the shift supervisor. The Volunteer Coordinator also handles all of the logistics needs for the volunteers, except the amateur radio equipment.

Volunteers at each viewing location can have face-to-face communications with Parks and Recreation staff who are stationed there, as well as one or more deputies. All of the amateur radio operators at the event operate on the same frequency during the event to provide communications both within each viewing location and to the net controller and shift supervisor.

Event Timeline

18:00 Resource Net opens for amateur radio operators

18:55 Everyone has arrived at Hyde, signed in, has a badge and vest

19:00 Briefings begin

19:20 Event net opens; volunteers walk to their assignment locations

21:30 Fireworks show begins

22:00 Fireworks end, public begins departing, watch for any problems

22:15 Volunteers help pack up;


sign out;

radio operators use the Resource net while travelling home;

venue leads return to Hyde to check out and then travel home

Event objectives

The event objectives were provided by the city OEM. The page below includes the objectives that pertained to the volunteers (as well as some others).

|  <p>CUPERTINO</p> | EVENT NAME: Fireworks Support CUP 23 27T | OPERATION PERIOD: July 4, 2023 1600-2300 hours | DATE/TIME PREPARED: June 29, 2023 1100 hours | OBJECTIVES CPT 202 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------------|----------|-------|---------------|--|-----------|--|----------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CITYWIDE OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide First Aid and Communications support at Command post and three viewing sites. 2. Provide situation status to command post and work with site leads to promote safety and enjoyable community event. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SITE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES (Include Safety Message) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure safety of all personnel at the test site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish First Aid in a safe visible location 2. Promote information sharing through available methods and platforms 3. Coordinate with the site leads and Command Post as needed for resources or support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SITE JOINT INFORMATION SECTION OBJECTIVES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare to answer questions and supply information to the public. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Event resources, bathrooms, viewing, first aid etc. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SITE OPERATIONS SECTION OBJECTIVES | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor activities to ensure sufficient resources are ordered and available 2. Gather, validate, and share essential Event related information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">FUNCTION</th> <th>GOALS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #cccccc;">VIEWING SITES</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">First Aid</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure medical safety among staff, volunteers, and patients - Provide medical care to scope of training, activate 911 as needed - Communicate with command post for additional resources if needed </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Communications</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish communication with command post any field teams - Report any items that cause issues with public safety - </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Citizen Corps Site Lead</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet Site Leads and coordinate location for set up - Sign in and out staff at site - Set up first Aid and communications, review supplies and request additional - Prepare situation status ie; Operational, specific events(record on ICS214) - Demob site at end of the event and get ready for pick up </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | | FUNCTION | GOALS | VIEWING SITES | | First Aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure medical safety among staff, volunteers, and patients - Provide medical care to scope of training, activate 911 as needed - Communicate with command post for additional resources if needed | Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish communication with command post any field teams - Report any items that cause issues with public safety - | Citizen Corps Site Lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet Site Leads and coordinate location for set up - Sign in and out staff at site - Set up first Aid and communications, review supplies and request additional - Prepare situation status ie; Operational, specific events(record on ICS214) - Demob site at end of the event and get ready for pick up |
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Performance against objectives

Note: This discussion addresses the objectives that directly pertained to the volunteer operations.

First Aid stations at the three viewing sites were staffed with volunteers trained in first aid. They successfully handled several minor injuries sustained by members of the public.

Relevant information for the public was provided to the volunteers, and they answered questions and assisted the public as needed.

Amateur radio communications were used to communicate within the three viewing locations as well as between those locations and the command post. An amateur radio was also loaned to the deputies at the command post so that they could listen to the volunteer net and instantly hear any emergency calls.

Event documents

The event documents are attached at the end of this document. They include the following.

Event briefing documents

ICS 309s and Travel Tracking from the resource nets

ICS 211's - the volunteers check in at Hyde and again at the viewing locations, and most are required to check out only at the viewing location

- note that some of the ICS-211s have the wrong location in the form header

ICS 205

ICS 214's

ICS 309's

Note that there was a formal ICS-213 message sent to the three venue leads at the request of the volunteer coordinator. He presented it to the net controllers on a CERT message form (included in the documentation). They gave him an SCCo ICS-213 form and asked him to copy the message onto that form. He did that, and the message was sent successfully.

Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement

Volunteers and sign-up

Observation:

Some volunteers who were new to CERT or ARES/RACES weren't aware of the basic expectations including arriving on time, bringing appropriate PPE, operating on a travel net, signing in and out at event locations, and correct use of basic forms.

Recommended action:

If we do want to include a new ham, they should be assigned to work side-by-side with an experienced operator who has agreed to coach the newcomer and help them learn how to fill out the appropriate forms. This should only be allowed with new operators who do have some basic

knowledge of using their radio and operating on a directed net. This has worked well in the past, but may not have been managed as carefully this year.

Observation:

Allowing volunteers to sign up in the last couple of days before the event caused substantial extra work for the planner and caused last minute changes to the assignments. One of two of these volunteers had little or no training.

Recommended action:

Set and publish a cut-off date for sign-ups from the beginning, and then enforce it.

Planning

Observation:

Planning for the event was stressful and rushed for two reasons. First, some of the information needed for the planning wasn't available to us until six days before the event. Second, there was only one planner. This isn't optimal in any case, but that became a bigger problem when that planner got sick and wasn't able to finish the planning. The handover to a second planner took time, so the second planner was especially rushed to finish on time.

Recommended action:

We need to educate the Parks and Recreation staff about our need for information well ahead of time. This probably could be done fairly simply in a short (15 minutes) meeting with Ken, 1 or 2 CARES planners, and a senior planner from Parks and Recreation. It would be good to do this even without a fireworks event in 2024.

Recommended action:

Start updating/writing the planning documents earlier.

Recommended action:

Have least two planners working together from the beginning.

Resource net

Observation:

Only 6 radio operators used the incoming resource net, and 11 used it on their way home. There were two sets of pre-event information sent to the participants, several days apart. Both included the event schedule, whose first entry was the time that the Resource Net would be open for volunteers traveling to the event. Both mailings also included the ICS-205, whose first three entries were the resource net repeaters, assigned to "Travel tracking".

Recommended action

Volunteers should be very clearly told that use of the Resource Net at this event is not optional.

Parking and access

Observation:

One volunteer reported not being able to get through barricades to be able to park near his assignment and reported that other volunteers were able to get through barricades by showing their badges.

Recommended action:

There should not have been any need to go through barricades to reach any of the places volunteers were told they could park. Perhaps we should give specific routes for the volunteers to take to reach the parking for each venue.

Briefings and pre-event communications

Observation:

Some volunteers had trouble hearing the oral briefings.

Recommended action:

In the past, we have had all the volunteers sit in the lower rows of the bleachers to ensure that everyone can hear. We need to make sure that happens every year.

Observation:

The briefings usually end with the three venue leads being introduced so that the people working with them will recognize them. Apparently, that didn't happen this year, and there was a complaint about it.

Recommended action:

Clearly identify the venue leads at the end of the briefings.

Event radio traffic and actions

Observation:

The event tactical net was not in use until after the briefing, so the credential evaluator used that frequency for message passing during the incoming resource net. Some operators at staging were confused, as they had assumed that a staging net was in progress.

Recommended action:

The fact that there was not a staging net while everyone was indoors in the gym should be clearly conveyed to the participants. Also, it's probably a good idea to move the message passing to another frequency anyway.

Observation:

The city's volunteer coordinator asked the net controllers to send an ICS-213 message. This had never been done before at this event.

Recommended action:

Feedback from the participants about this was positive, and this might be a good addition to other public service events that usually don't have a lot of radio traffic.

Observation:

The bridge connecting Creekside Park to East Estates Dr, where many people had parked, was overcrowded with people leaving Creekside at the end of the show. The mixture of adults, small children walking, children in strollers, and people on bicycles made the congestion worse.

Recommended action:

Alert Parks and Recreation to the issue of the bridge being overcrowded.

Observation:

The lights along the bridge between Creekside and E. Estates Dr. turned off at 10:00 pm, just as everyone was leaving. Some volunteers used their flashlights to try to help with the problem, but it was reportedly a big mess.

Recommended action:

Work with Public Works to ensure that the lights stay on longer.

Observation:

At Sedgewick school, the lawn sprinklers came on shortly after the fireworks ended while the public was leaving.

Recommended action:

Work with Public Works to ensure that the sprinklers either don't come on that evening or are delayed by an hour or more.

First Aid Stations

Observation:

The First Aid sign at Miller wasn't adequately visible. It was located behind a row of bushes, and the volunteers had no place to set up their own "First Aid" banner.

Recommended action:

The location of the first aid station was determined by the Parks and Recreation department. If the station can't be moved to a location that's more visible, then A-frame signage should be made available.

Forms and documentation

Observation:

The ICS-211 forms that were used at some of the locations were Cupertino city forms, not county forms.

Recommended action:

Remind city staff that we use only county forms for drills and events.

Observation:

The documentation contains some pre-printed city forms for each of the three viewing location leads. These include an ICS-214 with pre-printed actions. Apparently, these were given to the venue volunteer leads by city staff.

Recommended action:

Advise the city OEM that pre-filled ICS-214s are not a good idea. Any to-do lists should be provided in a different format.