

After-Action Report

Fourth of July Fireworks 2025



ARES/RACES

1. Overview

Description: July 4th Fireworks
Event Date: 4 July 2025
Report Date: 11 July 2025
Cupertino Event: CUP-25-27T
Control: Cupertino OEM
Report Revision: 1.0
Submitted By: Steve Hill, Cupertino ARES and CERT

Requirements for Reporting

Completing an After Action Report is part of the required SEMS reporting process. The Emergency Services Act, Section 8607 (f) mandates that the Office of Emergency Services (OES) in cooperation with involved state and local agencies complete an After Action Report within 120 days after each declared disaster. Section 2450 (a) of the SEMS Regulations states that, "Any city, city and county, or county declaring a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, and any state agency responding to that emergency shall complete and transmit an after action report to OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident period as specified in the California Code of Regulations, section 2900(j)."

Additionally, Cupertino Citizen Corps will use the After Action Report format for documenting training drills and exercises.

i. Introduction and Background

Terms

CARES	Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service, ARES/RACES organization supporting the City of
CCC	Cupertino Citizens Corps, the reference to Cupertino OEM volunteers from the CARES, CERT, and MRC organizations.
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team, Cupertino volunteers who have completed FEMA's CERT training.
CP	Command Post at Hyde Middle School, Gym Room
Creekside	Tactical call abbreviations listed in this report for Creekside Park
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FRS	Family Radio Service, as defined by the Federal Communications Commission FCC
Hyde	Tactical call abbreviations listed in this report for Hyde Middle School

IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post, Gym Room, Hyde Middle School
ICS	Incident Command System
MAC	Mutual Aid Communicators; volunteers from throughout Santa Clara County who are registered and trained to provide mutual aid support as required.
MRC	Medical Reserve Corps, Cupertino volunteers who have elected to pursue an emergency medical certification.
NCO	Net Control Operator
NCS	Net Control Station
NCU	Net Control Unit
OEM	Cupertino Office of Emergency Management
PW	Public Works Department
P&R	Parks and Recreation Department, Event Sponsor
SCC	Services Santa Clara County; usually used in conjunction to references of County RACES, County OES, or County EOC
Sedgwick	Tactical call abbreviations listed in this report for Sedgwick School
Site/Venue	Designated viewing sites: Sedgwick Elementary School, Creekside Park, and Miller Avenue
SO	Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office

Introduction

The City of Cupertino (City) requested communications, logistics, and first aid support from Cupertino Citizen Corps during the 2025 Cupertino Fourth of July Fireworks event. To staff the event, Cupertino Office of Emergency Services activated the Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES), the Cupertino Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and the Cupertino Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

In June, the Cupertino Parks and Recreation held one one-hour in-person event planning session, and a second planning session on July 1 via Zoom.

On July 4, the City of Cupertino initiated a Citizen Corps Training Activation under the designation CUP-25-27T.

This report covers the activities undertaken by responding volunteers in support of this event.

ii. Type/location of Event / Drill / Exercise

Event Type:	City Activation
Event Identifier:	CUP-25-27T
Event Name:	Cupertino 4 th of July Fireworks
Location:	City of Cupertino

iii. Description of Event / Drill / Exercise

The City of Cupertino sponsored a Fourth of July Fireworks display for city residents. The fireworks were launched from Hyde Middle School with viewing locations identified at Creekside Park, Sedgwick Elementary School and the southern portion of Miller Avenue.

To maintain the security of the launch site and ensure the safety of the public, the Hyde campus was closed between 4:45 p.m. and 11 p.m., as were the following 16 locations on adjacent streets:

Miller Avenue

- Atherwood
- Bollinger
- Disney
- Howard Court
- Phil

Stendhal

- Phil
- Shadygrove

Tantau

- Phil
- Shadygrove

Shadygrove

- Brookgrove
- Ferngrove

Hyde

- Bollinger
- Shadygrove
- Willowgrove

Willowgrove / Brookgrove

Finch / Tilson

Event resources were provided from the following organizations:

1. Cupertino Parks and Recreation: Full-time and seasonal staff members were responsible for overall event control, coordination, venue setups, and perimeter control.
2. Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office (SO): ~25 Deputies were responsible for overall event security and general law enforcement. SO deployed a mix of patrol cars and motorcycles.
3. Santa Clara County Fire District: One Engine Company was positioned adjacent to the launch site and responsible for fireworks safety.
4. CARES: Responsible for maintaining communications with viewing location staff and the ICP at Hyde.
5. Cupertino MRC and CERT members were divided among the viewing sites, with a lead at each site that provided on-site coordination. These combined MRC/CERT teams were responsible for event first aid. There were insufficient numbers of CERTs to make venue roving teams.
6. Logistics for the event was managed by Cupertino OEM.
7. The Net Control station used a push-up antenna, with NCOs sitting at a table. The street closures, issues with access to the Hyde playground and close proximity to the fireworks launch location made it impractical to deploy 469. The longest transmission distance is under 0.75 miles, obviating the requirement for a high mast antenna.
9. Volunteers signed in at 7:00 pm.
10. Staffing and assignments are displayed on the following table.

Event Objectives were:

Event objective	Outcome
Exercise informal message passing and message net procedures.	Successful. Reception was good and operators were professional.
Practice unified command operations with the Sheriff's Office, P&R, PW and Fire.	Not done. Each entity was self-managed. The CARES Net Control was set up outside the Hyde gym where the SO had its command post.
Exercise first aid operations.	Successful. The public did not ask for first aid attention.
CCC following established mobilization, operating, and demobilization procedures.	Successful. Mobilization at Miller, Creekside and Sedgwick went smoothly and quickly. Operating procedures were followed during the event.

iv. Chronological Summary of Event / Exercise

Time	Event
4:45	<p>Street closures to traffic begin</p> <p>4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Atherwood Ave. @ Candlewood Dr. 2. Atherwood Ave. @ Miller Ave. 3. Howard Ct. @ Miller Ave. 4. Stendhal Ln. @ Shadygrove Dr. 5. Finch Ave. @ Tilson Ave. 6. Disney Ln. @ Miller Ave. 7. Miller Ave. @ Bollinger Rd. 8. Miller Ave. @ Phil Ln. <p>5:45 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hyde Ave. @ Willowgrove Ln. 2. Hyde Ave. @ Bollinger Rd. 3. Hyde Ave. @ Shadygrove Dr. <p>5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stendahl Ln. @ Phil Ln. 2. Phil Ln. @ S. Tantau Ave. 3. Willowgrove Ln. @ Brookgrove Ln. 4. Shadygrove Ln. @ S. Tantau Ave. 5. Brookgrove Ln. @ Shadygrove Ln. 6. Ferngrove Ln. @ Shadygrove Ln.
7:00	CARES sets up Net Control on basketball area next to gym
7:00	<p>Volunteers arrive at their venues from home.</p> <p>Check-in and briefing by venue leads.</p> <p>Mobilization begins</p>
8:32	Sunset
9:30	Fireworks begin.
9:50	Fireworks end.
10:00	<p>Fire marshal checks Hyde for debris and duds</p> <p>Public Works begins removal of street barricades.</p>
10:15	Volunteers begin demobilization.
10:45	Event complete. Cupertino CCC members checkout at their venues.

v. Response at SEMS Levels (as appropriate):

Include a summary, conclusions, the field response, and other local, operational area, regional, state or federal response.

Not appropriate for this event.

vi. Interacting Systems, Agencies, and Programs:

Include mutual aid systems (law enforcement, fire/rescue, medical, etc.); cooperating entities (utilities, American Red Cross, Sheriff's Office, City Departments, etc.); telecommunications and media interactions.

Cupertino Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

OEM Citizen Corps Coordinator, Ken Erickson, supported the event as an advisor to the Cupertino Citizen Corps Incident Command staff and as Event Logistics and authorized activation of volunteers under event number CUP-25-27T.

Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff's Office managed area security and public safety. Citizen Corps staff acted as eyes and ears for the SO's Office by providing on-site information to the deputies. CARES, acting as Planning and Intelligence Section, established an information flow between CARES Net Control, Volunteer Groups, and the SO.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation provided regular paid and summer interim staff for the event. Interactions with all staff were smooth. Parks and Recreation uses cell phones to communicate with each other. P&R arranged for volunteer parking at each venue.

Medical Reserve Corps

MRC volunteers staffed three first aid stations and were tightly integrated into the overall event command and control. Each site reported responded to first aid requests from the observing public.

Communications Systems

CARES TAC-3 (440.150+, Tone 100.0)

FRS radios were not used by CERT volunteers between site ICPs and roving field teams due to insufficient number of CERT volunteers.

vii. Improvements, Conclusions, Recommendations:

As applicable, include a description of actions taken, assignments, associated costs or budget, timetable for completion or correction, and follow-up responsibility.

The following is a summary of the key Improvements, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

What worked:

- Overall, radio operation went well; Net control was professional.
Use of Google Forms for signups. Data from Forms can be set to feed Google Sheets.
- Having all volunteers travel from home to their venues to sign in and receive briefing. Event briefing and safety documents were sent to volunteers prior to event, so they could read and absorb it before reporting for duty.
- Final volunteer assignments were sent to volunteers on July 3.

What needs improvement?

- Cupertino did not have enough MRC volunteers to staff three first aid stations (6 positions). CERT volunteers were used to fill the gaps.
- IC must emphasize final venue assignments to volunteers if any changes were made after the preliminary assignments were distributed.
- Volunteers must be given written description of their duties and responsibilities. Specifically, the description would describe what they are not expected to do.

Recommendations for Future Events**Parks and Recreation**

1. P&R should identify the position and responsibilities for an Event Safety Officer.
2. Announcement of the “all clear” from Fire needs to be formally communicated to Citizen Corps at the command post. This message can then be relayed via radio to the three venues.
3. Inform each venue when Fire tests the PA system, so people are not startled.
4. Put lights on in the Creekside restroom area after sunset.
5. Illuminate the western side of the Sedgwick grass field. People were left to walk in the dark during their exit.

Citizen Corps

1. Remind volunteers to bring their own forms (CARES, CERT and MRC).
2. Open up discussion on effective communications between entities.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

1. None.

viii. Training Needs

1. 4th of July Execution Plan. Update all sections to incorporate learning’s from feedback derived from this event.
2. Instill the need for all CCC volunteers to bring the necessary forms to every activation.

ix. Recovery Activities (as applicable)

Recovery Activities were limited to securing equipment for Logistics removal, and command center shutdown.

x. References: Maps, charts, training materials, etc.

Below is the list of material developed and provided as part of the Volunteer Briefing Packet:

- Maps, including volunteer field locations
- Operations briefing
- Safety briefing
- Communications plan
- Venue assignments and tactical call signs

xi. Volunteer Feedback:**What worked?**

Everything went well and smoothly as per the original plan. We got excellent cooperation and teamwork with the City folks (Park & Rec and Public Works).

Ken Ericksen brought the trailer which had all the equipment that we needed. We had a long power cord which we plugged into the school outlet. We had an experienced crew with Ken, Judy, Fari, Marilyn and myself. I brought the hand held radios where the CERT members could communicate while walking the venue. There were no incidents to report. Judy received numerous welfare checks throughout the night, and all was well. The residents were very orderly.

To observe as to play an eye and ear on the surrounding on Miller 3 area

Nice Assignment - easy to participate - lighting was good.

I appreciated getting an assignment that I had not done before.

Good communication between Parks&Rec as they were located at the same location.
Good communication across the venues.

All operations and organizing worked. Trailer arrived on time, staff checked in before the trailers arrival and the scheduled check-in time, station was set up well before the event start time, staff walked the field for potential issues and answered questions from the general public, and NC performed health and welfare on time regularly.

A slightly mixed blessing: it was good to have prior assignments so we could go directly to the sites at a more reasonable hour, shortening the time to spend "waiting around!" But I missed having a gathering ahead, just to connect with the other volunteers for a short time.

Set up for LED lights around the MRC table went well, electrical outlet was available. Adequate number of knowledgeable volunteers. Judy did a great job. Appreciated the music provided.

What didn't work or could be improved?

I cannot think of anything else that could improve our set up and service to the public.

I didn't bring any ICS forms, but I was given what I needed. I need to be a little better prepared next time. The portable toilets were a little far from the center of the venue, but it was not a big issue. They may have been delivered when the fencing was still locked up, so it is understandable

But I was confused that I needed to go to the Creekside Park for reporting there @ 7:00 pm and started briefing there. I am concerned that I need to walk from Creekside Park to Miller 3 area by myself and walk back to Creekside Park parking lot by myself after the firework is finished. But thank God that Ken told me that I can stay at Creekside Park to work with the Medical team there instead of walking along the way from Creekside Park to Miller 3 area at the corner of Bollinger Road and Miller.

Not much, it all worked well.

Everything went well; I have no suggestions.

This happens each year, we need better coordination with the fire marshal for the "all-clear" after the fire works show ends. We know we will be waiting for this for sometime but that "all-clear" never

really came, we just started standing down after nearly an hour. This seems to happen each year. This needs to be better coordinated.

The communications with the Parks and Recreation could be better if they notified us ahead of time on their testing announcement because we were confused about the testing announcement as real one such that we need to talk to them to clarify. The situation was caused by (a) no prior communication before their testing announcement, (b) the speaker was oriented toward the field which is away from our station, and (c) the music was barely tuned down.

In addition, we were not clear after the show whether we need to walk the field to make sure no one was behind before the Parks and Recreation lock the gate. However, we talked to the Parks and Recreation staff to confirm that they would sweep the field and thanked us and let us go.

The main concern I had was the general lighting at Creekside—lights did not go on for restrooms, parking lots, etc after dark but before fireworks. Long lines for the restrooms and lighting should have priority for general safety of everyone. They went on briefly just before(? or after?), but not long enough! Our lead did try to get P and R to respond to this.

The area at the Western end of the Sedgwick field had no lights. This meant that when residents were leaving the field after the fireworks were over, the grass area was not illuminated for about half of the field. As you know this is a rather uneven surface, with clumps of grass and gopher holes. There were lights posted towards the exit by the gate on S. Tantau and the exit walking towards Phil Lane.

What should we do differently next time?

As per above comment, this site was easy to setup, run, and demob. Let us keep the formula for next time.

In my opinion we had more off duty sheriffs officers than we needed.

Please give clear directions ahead of time. I should go to Steven Creek Blvd and turn right at Miller and head to Creekside Park to park the car. Because I was confused, how can I get there because the streets will be closed at 5:00 pm. I thank Ken had given me clear direction the way to go to Miller and park my car at the Creekside Parking lot, plus he told me that I can stay at Creekside Park to work with the medical team at Creekside Park instead to go by myself to walk from Creekside Park to Miller 3 area as an eye and ear over there to watch people. If this is the case, I am concerned where I can sit and who will be my buddy to work with. Moreover, I was scared that I would need to walk by myself back and forth from Creekside Park to the Miller 3 area at the corner of Bollinger and Miller in the dark. I would rather work with the Medical team like before instead just as an eye and eye to watch the public on the field without a chair to sit in the dark, that is scary!

Organize the event earlier with publicity so that we get more public participation. (City Action.)

Everything went well; I have no suggestions.

For this year, the decision to have this event was so very late, its really not fair to say what could be improved in that lots of things had to be last minute.

Maybe a clearer specific description for our duties in situations described as in item 3.

A portable light source at the Western end would provide a safer exit.