

After-Action Report

Fourth of July Fireworks PSE 2026



ARES/RACES

1. Overview

Description: July 4th Fireworks Public Service Event

Event Date: 4 July 2026

Report Date: 10 July 2026

Cupertino Event: CUP-26-27T

Control: Cupertino OEM

Report Revision: 3

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 (Neil Valenzuela, Captain)

Introduction

The City of Cupertino (City) requested communications, logistics, and first aid support from Cupertino Citizen Corps during the 2026 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).

On July 4, the City of Cupertino initiated a Citizen Corps Training Activation under the designation CUP-26-27T.

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-26-27T
Event Name:	Cupertino 4 th of July Fireworks Public Service Event
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	Shadygrove
• Atherwood	• Brookgrove
• Bollinger	• Ferngrove
• Disney	Hyde
• Howard Court	• Bollinger
• Phil	• Shadygrove
Stendhal	• Willowgrove
• Phil	• Finch
• Shadygrove	• Tilson
Tantau	
• Phil	
• Shadygrove	

Event resources were provided by 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): ~20 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. One safety officer oversaw the conduct of the fireworks setup and launching. Managed handling of duds after show.
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 an HT, with the NCO sitting at a table outside Hyde Gym. The street closures, issues with access to the Hyde playground and 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 their venues by 7:00 pm.
10. Staffing and assignments are displayed on the following table (removed for confidentiality).

Venue	Assignment	Name	Call sign / Org.	Tactical Call Sign
Creekside	Venue lead			Creekside Lead
	Radio operator			Creekside 3
	CERT			Creekside 4
	First Aid			Creekside First Aid
Sedgwick	Venue lead			Sedgwick Lead
	Radio operator			Sedgwick 2
	Radio operator			Sedgwick 3
	CERT			Sedgwick 4
	First Aid			Sedgwick First Aid
Miller	Venue lead			Miller Lead
	Radio operator			Miller 2
	CERT			Miller 3
	Miller First Aid			Miller First Aid
Hyde	Net Control			Net Control
	Incident Cmdr.			IC

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. CARES NCO made several requests for crowd headcounts at each venue. The data was hand delivered to the SO Captain by the CCC IC.
Exercise first aid operations.	Successful. An adult at Creekside hurt his ankle playing soccer with his son. He was given an ice pack and assisted to the parking lot.
CCC following established mobilization, operating, and demobilization procedures.	Successful. Mobilization and demobilization at Miller, Creekside, Sedgwick and ICP went smoothly and quickly. Operating procedures were followed during the event.

iv. Chronological Summary of Event / Exercise

Time	Event
5:00	Street closures to traffic begin
7:00	CARES sets up Net Control on basketball area next to gym
7:00	Volunteers arrive at their venues from home. Check-in and briefing by venue leads. Mobilization begins
9:30	Fireworks begin.
9:50	Fireworks end.
10:00	Volunteers begin demobilization.
10:00	Fire marshal checks Hyde for debris and duds Public Works begins removal of street barricades.
10:30	Cupertino CCC members checked out 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 E, 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-26-27T.

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 sent 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.
- CCC team at Creekside used as a lost and found for a mobile phone. Thoughtful person gave the phone to the team, and later, the owner approached the table and was happy to get it.

What needs improvement?

- We could have used a few more CERTs for roving and assisting MRC.

Recommendations for Future EventsParks and Recreation

1. P&R should identify the position and responsibilities for an Event Safety Officer.
2. Play patriotic music over speakers.
3. Deploy signage for porta potty locations

Citizen Corps

1. Open up discussion on effective communications between entities.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

1. Check supplies of disposables and dated items in first aid bags, and replace/add accordingly.

viii. Training Needs

1. 4th of July PSE Execution Plan. Update all sections to incorporate learnings from feedback derived from this event.

ix. Recovery Activities (Demobilization)

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

Miller and IC furniture and equipment were placed in CCC Coordinator's City pickup truck at Miller

Sedgwick furniture and equipment were placed back in the CCC trailer that was onsite.

Creekside furniture and equipment were placed back in the park's meeting room.

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

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

- Two pages of instructions
- Maps of each venue and road closures, including volunteer field locations
- Operations briefing
- Safety briefing
- Safety Message and Plan, ICS-208
- Communications Plan, ICS-205
- Venue assignments and tactical call signs

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

It was a smooth evening, entirely non-eventful. All volunteers were at Sedgewick by 1850 and we started unpacking the 486 right away. The outlet is functional (at the building near the South entrance) and we used that as our power source. Thank you to Ken and Al for delivering ice and the AED. Thankfully, neither was needed.

There were plenty of safety personnel. The crowd was well behaved

The event preparation documents sent out ahead of the event were excellent— very well organized and on point with all the critical information we might need. It put us all on the same page which helped promote great teamwork at the venue.

Brian AG6GX was great as Net Control and Mary and Kugawa-San were great examples for me as venue radio operators.

The location of CERT/CARES/MRC was very visible, next to Park and Rec. A lot of folks visited. It has been a huge success and a very popular event.

What worked well? >> We did not see any issues. Though the crowd was big- around 1600 people. Many kids. The event went thoroughly smoothly. There were many parks and recreation employees volunteering too. We had to only guide the kids to go and play around away from the crowd.

Everything went so smoothly that I have no suggestions for improvements. You did a great job!

Set up. Went well and we made a couple of adjustments where the popup was located. Maybe a map detail showing final placement and location to an electrical outlet would be good.

Everything was first class!

Not allowing dogs was a big relief to me. Eliminating the possibility of an anxious, scared dog biting someone.

The organization, instructions, and maps are very helpful. We used the map to show residents where are the best viewing areas :)

What didn't work or could be improved?

Not related to CCC, but signage for bathrooms would have been helpful.

Creekside needed more lighting. The toilets ran out of supplies due to large crowds. When notified, Parks and Recs replenished the supplies

One minor tweak would be to add a suggestion to bring duct tape to tape down electrical cords. It turns out because we had access to an electrical outlet at Sedgewick, we didn't need to power up the generator but it did mean running an extension cord across a sidewalk. There may be duct tape somewhere in the supply trailer, but we were able to quickly borrow some from the Parks & Rec staff.

There also was a gap at Sedgewick in that P. Muni did not bring a working radio to the event even though he was assigned as a radio operator. You had notified myself and Greg K the Sedgewick Venue Lead that he has been unreliable in the past, so we were not caught off guard and everything worked out ok. Kudos to you for having a system to keep track of those that are less capable/reliable so they do not become critical points of failure.

We were not able to determine when would be the maximum number of people to fit in the viewing area since there were still space. However a lot of people were "jammed", seated or standing on the borders outskirts of the grassy area next to the playground. I was wondering if the taped area was off limits for public seating since there were still people going inside like children playing and adults seated nearby.

Maybe we need to discuss with Parks and Recreation staff and combine the help. Otherwise, it looked like two independent teams.

Maybe a couple of porta potties located on the Phil Lane side. Most of the activity was related to the location of the porta potties. The field could have used one more light on the far side of the viewing area. That area was very dark, and the field had some gopher holes. Fortunately, no one had any mishaps.

I cannot think of anything to improve.

Please, pretty please, can there be some signage about where the port-a-potties are? In several languages? Such as Mandarin, Farsi etc. We had dozens of people wandering around looking for a restroom and some were not happy that the school restrooms were not made available. I do not think opening the school is necessary, just some direction to help people be comfortable. Signs on A-frame stands would work.

There was an insufficient number of porty potties.

Most of the supplies we needed were in the trailer so that was good. Yet the hand sanitizer was outdated by about three years and no longer at 70% alcohol concentration needed to work properly, it had turned gummy. Please could this get replaced. Also, we had no paper towels so I brought the roll I had in my car for us to use and left it with the supplies when we packed up.

We have the usual band-aid requests, and one unusual twisted ankle due to playing soccer with kids. We had ice but did not have Ziploc bag to create an ice pack for the patient, so improvised with the gloves instead

What should we do differently next time?

N/A.

I wasn't expecting to estimate crowd size. Announce that in the plan ahead of time.

I can't think of any improvements.

The fireworks were spectacular. Some have suggested to pair the sights with some patriotic renditions such as Francis Scott Key "Star Spangled Banner", or "God Bless the USA". Very soft and endearing. I personally think that less or no sound is perfect.

Song background was some modern music. I think for the fireworks, some of the music should be patriotic. They wouldn't have to be ancient songs, but there are many more recent songs used for fireworks and a playlist could easily be created from some of the televised fireworks. America the Beautiful, God Bless the USA, the 1812 overture, Stars and Stripes Forever, This Land is Your Land, and so many others.

No changes or improvements needed.

A few of us spoke with Alex from Parks and Rec. after suggesting that patriotic music be played towards the last few minutes of the fireworks display. The music used was not typical or festive enough than music usually used to view fireworks.

Could there be a "report time" for volunteers on one of the sheets mailed out?

A few Ziploc bags in the first-aid bag to create an ice pack

What comments, observations, and event stories do you have?

We all got along well as a cohesive team. As I was joking with Steve in a separate email....a successful event is when the most common reason people approached us is to ask where the bathrooms are. Thank you for soliciting feedback and incorporating it (as needed) for next year. Thank you also to Stacey and Marilyn for the delicious treats! Always appreciated!

It was a very enjoyable evening working with my fellow volunteers and watching the fireworks show.

Someone dropped their iPhone and one of the visitors brought it to me. Then I asked parks and recreation staff to make the announcement, but no one came by. Left the phone with the communicator. At the end, someone called the number and came by to pick it up.

I think this was the most disappointing to several folks that the music didn't match the occasion.

The entire event went very smoothly. I wish the choice of music was under your control; it would have been much better and appropriate than what Parks & Rec provided!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and for the organization it took to make this event such a success. I really appreciated the email that was sent with the maps and directions and reminders of conduct.

The crowds increased significantly in the last hour