

WETA's Role in a Regional Emergency



For More Information

To read more about WETA's emergency response efforts please see WETA's Emergency Response Plan available on WETA's website or contact WETA at (415) 291-3377.

watertransit.org/weta

WETA WATER EMERGENCY
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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Agency Background

The Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) was created by the California State Legislature in 2007 to operate public ferry service, expand ferry service on the San Francisco Bay, and coordinate the maritime response to a regional emergency such as an earthquake.

Operating under the "San Francisco Bay Ferry" brand, WETA carries over 2.7 million passengers annually with a fleet of 11 vessels serving the cities of Vallejo, San Francisco, Oakland, South San Francisco, and Alameda. WETA is working with its public and private partners to develop and launch new services to Richmond, Treasure Island, Berkeley, Redwood City and other Bay Area cities in the coming years.



WETA's Emergency Response Roles

In the event of an emergency that disrupts regional transportation systems, WETA would function as both **an operator of emergency water transportation services and as the coordinator of the region's water transit response.**

Emergency water transportation operations are defined as emergency movement of survivors, first responders and disaster service workers (DSWs). WETA's emergency water transportation operations would most likely be implemented after a Governor's Proclamation of Emergency and an accompanying Stafford Act Declaration that results in the activation of the California Office of Emergency Service's (Cal OES) State Operations Center (SOC). In such a situation, WETA will manage its own assets, resources provided by mutual aid and additional resources that WETA may contract with.

WETA also implements enhanced ferry service when there are disruptions to the region's transbay transportation infrastructure such as closure of the Bay Bridge, transit strikes, closure of the BART Transbay Tube, or major accidents. In such circumstances WETA/San Francisco Bay Ferry responds as a transit agency, coordinating increased service with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and connecting transit agencies.

Coordination of the Region's Water Transit Emergency Response

In response to a regional emergency, WETA would assist regional, state, and federal agencies by assessing and monitoring the status of water transit resources (facilities, vessels, fuel, crews, etc.), coordinating additional mutual aid or contracted resources, and working with WETA's own contracted ferry operator to create and implement an emergency water transportation service plan.

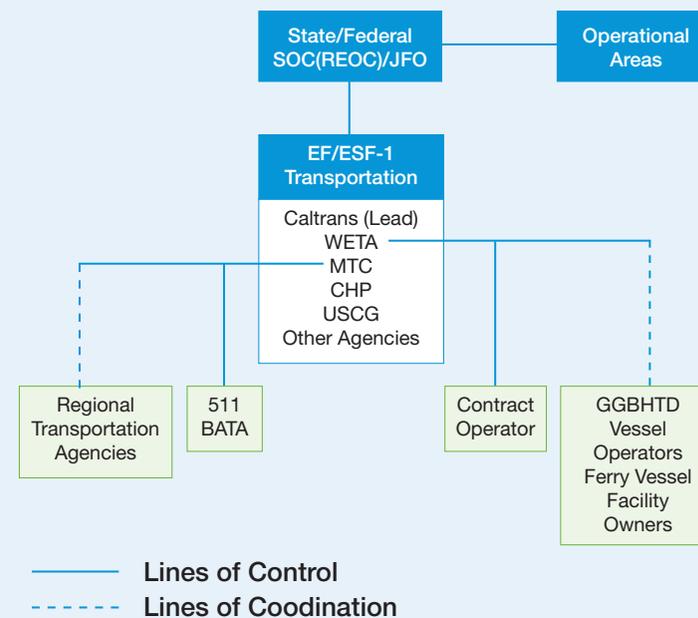
WETA's Emergency Response Plan (ERP)—adopted by the WETA Board of Directors in March 2016—details the agency's emergency response responsibilities and the processes through which it would coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal partners. The ERP also identifies resources that WETA would need to access from these partners to fulfill its vital emergency water transit role, including:

- Credentialing assistance to ensure and expedite ferry worker's access through roadblocks to ferry terminals and vessels
- Access to fuel and emergency funding for sustained response
- Security/ crowd control at ferry terminals
- Increased staffing
- Supporting transit connectivity for follow on movement of survivors to shelters
- Assistance from state and regional partners to obtain land and services to construct temporary ferry terminals and expedite the process

WETA's ERP is consistent with the joint state and federal plan for a catastrophic earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area, *The Bay Area Earthquake Plan*, published July 2016.

Where WETA Sits Within SEMS

WETA is a regional authority and as such falls into the Regional Level of the California State Emergency Management System (SEMS). WETA collaborates with MTC and other agencies in California Emergency Function 1 (EF 1) Transportation, a group which supports the Cal OES SOC with transportation expertise in order for Cal OES to prioritize the response and create a transportation service plan to respond to the emergency. EF 1 Transportation is led by Caltrans at the SOC. The figure below depicts the organization of EF 1 Transportation and its component agencies.



In its role within EF 1 Transportation, WETA provides maritime transit expertise and emergency water transportation service planning and coordination. WETA delivers status reports on the ferry system and regional ferry assets to the SOC through EF 1 Transportation as well as to MTC for dissemination to other transit agencies.

WETA Emergency Water Transportation Operations

WETA's emergency water transportation operations are generally initiated at the request of, and directed by, Cal OES to address the response to incidents such as major earthquakes that destroy or disrupt normal transportations systems to the extent that only extraordinary measures may provide for movement of first responders and DSWs into the incident impact area and movement of survivors out of the impact area.

WETA will provide survivor movement transportation under conditions such as:

- Movement of survivors leaving their homes or workplaces due to evacuation orders or who have fled an area due to an immediate life safety threat
- Returning people to their area of residence when stranded by the loss of primary transportation systems
- Providing lifeline transportation services to communities to promote recovery operations

Dependent upon the specific incident requirements and the availability of passenger vessel resources and operable terminals, agencies supporting EF 1 Transportation will develop a priority route system for movement of survivors and movement of first responders and DSWs.

Coordination of a water and land emergency transportation service plan of operations for movement of these populations will require multi-agency coordination with MTC, Caltrans, United States Coast Guard, surface transportation agencies, organizations operating shelters and jurisdictions requesting transport. This coordination is accomplished through EF 1 Transportation and EF 6 Mass Care.

WETA will manage and operate water transportation routes that provide service between ferry terminals as part of a larger transportation system that connects with care and shelter sites or base camps. Movement of first responders and DSWs into incident areas to provide life safety services is likely to require shuttle service as many of these individuals will stage out of base camps away from incident locations.

More information on WETA's Operational priorities and time based courses of action for emergency water transportation operations can be located in section 3.3 of WETA's Emergency Response Plan available on WETA's website.

Communications

In an event resulting in loss of power and regular communications, WETA will utilize satellite phones, VHF radios, and P25 trunked multiband radios to communicate with the contract operator, vessel dispatch, WETA's two Emergency Operations Centers, Cal OES and other emergency management agencies.

Coordination, Training and Exercises

WETA regularly coordinates its emergency response efforts with the MTC, other bay area transit agencies, Cal OES, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, the Ports of San Francisco and Oakland.

In addition to internal staff training, WETA participates in several emergency response exercises and training workshops each year. Recent participation includes:

- Metropolitan Transportation Commissions Emergency Table Top annual exercises
- San Francisco Fleet Week Defense Support of Civilian Authorities exercises
- Bay Ferry exercises
- Urban Shield Yellow Command
- Golden Guardian

Additionally, WETA's contracted operator participates in some of the above exercises as well as operation-based exercises such as oil spill drills and Vessel Mutual Assistance Plan exercises.