



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# City of San Diego Launches Local Office of Emergency Services to Refocus Efforts on Disaster Preparedness

FORMER DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WILL BRING EMERGENCY PLANNING IN LINE WITH STATE AND COUNTY PARTNERS

SAN DIEGO – With the threat of wildfires and other natural disasters ever present in our region, the City of San Diego is launching its new Office of Emergency Services (OES) formerly known as the City's Office of Homeland Security which was housed under the Police Department. This new office will refocus the City's efforts on disaster preparedness and better identify the responsibilities of this crucial function within the local jurisdiction.

**“Responding to a disaster is about providing the critical services San Diegans need to endure and recover. That’s why my administration has proposed this change,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. “The new Office of Emergency Services positions the City to better respond in times of crisis with a coordinated, regional approach that will make San Diego safer for all of us.”**

During a disaster, the City's OES will lead all response efforts at the city level and will work closely with [Cal OES](#), the state agency, and the [San Diego County Office of Emergency Services](#).

Former San Diego Fire-Rescue Deputy Chief Christopher Heiser has been named as the City's OES Executive Director, stepping into his new role with a wealth of experience having served in emergency management capacities over his distinguished 40-year career. Heiser joined the City of San Diego in 2013 and worked previously at the Carlsbad Fire Department.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Heiser served as incident commander for Operation Shelter to Home at the San Diego Convention Center. He was also instrumental in standing up City-operated vaccination sites, including the Municipal Gym location, and deploying pods of vaccinators who administered more than 80,000 vaccinations.

**“We’re incredibly proud at how our emergency responders reacted quickly and saved many lives during the pandemic,” said Chief Operations Officer Jay Goldstone, who will directly oversee the**

**City's OES. "This coordinated response is key to the role that San Diego's Office of Emergency Services will play, to communicate with our staff and regional partners, and to develop a preparedness strategy aimed at keeping our residents and visitors safe."**

**"Any emergency can be just around the corner; I want San Diegans to know we stand ready to jump into action," said San Diego OES Executive Director Christopher Heiser. "My experience in the region, including duties as deputy chief with San Diego Fire-Rescue, afford me a working knowledge of emergency preparation and response."**

San Diego OES oversees disaster preparedness, emergency management and response, including recovery and mitigation programs. Grant funding covers costs for a variety of emergency training, equipment and other resources for the City, as well as the Southern California region.

In April, Mayor Gloria announced a series of proposed [public safety priorities and reforms to police practices](#). Part of this package included removing the Office of Homeland Security as a program of the San Diego Police Department in an effort to better focus the office on emergency preparedness.

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