

National Preparedness Month Survey – Outcome Statement (2021)

In September 2021, San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department used a survey to collect feedback from residents about their concerns regarding potential hazards to Belmont, Foster City, and San Mateo and emergency preparedness measures that they have taken. The survey closed on October 6, 2021, and received 34 responses. Here are the highlights from the survey responses:

The majority of respondents have lived in this community for 20 or more years. When assessing community preparedness, 25 respondents have talked about what to do in case of an emergency, 25 respondents have anchored service utilities to their homes identified, and 24 have made an emergency kit or assembled emergency supplies.

The survey asked, “What hazards around your community most concern you today?” The question allowed respondents to list multiple answers, and of the combined 34 responses:

- 32 of responses identified earthquakes
- 18 of responses identified drought
- 16 of responses identified wildland fire

Another question asked, “In your opinion, which of the following community assets are most vulnerable to natural hazards in your community?” and allowed for open ended responses, where participants could identify and explain their recommendations. Common themes that emerged were that people are most concerned with loss of life and/or injuries followed by a tie for second with infrastructure damage and governmental continuity.

Another question asked, “Which of the following actions do you think should be taken in order to reduce damage and disruption from hazard events within your City?”, and then rank them.

- “Strengthen infrastructure” had the highest number of responses as a “high priority”, with “Develop climate adaptation plans, policies, or projects to minimize potential negative impacts from climate change” for the second highest priority.
- “Protect cultural and /or historic resources” had the highest number of “low priority” responses.

Community members identified electronic sources as the best way to inform them of hazards and preparedness measures, and 47% of respondents would attend public education classes dealing with emergency preparedness & hazard awareness.

The winners of our three emergency preparedness kits were Roberta B. from Foster City, Douglas B. from San Mateo, and Doug B. from Belmont.

Thank you to all those who offered feedback to this important topic. Look for future SMCFD topics to continue to join the conversation and see what others are saying. Your feedback is key to helping the Cities of Belmont, Foster City, and San Mateo offer the best services to citizens.