

Statewide Emergency Preparedness Coordination Group (SWEPC) Meeting Minutes: May 26, 2026

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Tony Vasquez, Program Manager II

- Welcomed attendees and opened the meeting.
- Announced SWEPC meetings will transition to a biannual schedule beginning in 2027, with spring and fall meetings.
- Explained SWEPC and CA-ESF/RSF meetings are now co-located on the same day to reduce partner meeting burden.
- Announced one final SWEPC meeting will be held in November 2026.
- Introduced Andrew Rush as the new Emergency Functions Planning Unit (EFPU) Program Manager I.

Presentations

Summer Weather Outlook

Presenter: Courtney Carpenter, National Weather Service

Key Discussion Points

- Provided an overview of the Catastrophic Incident Base Plan (CIBP) update effort and current status
- Reviewed California weather outlook and NWS coordination structure.
- Reported 33 atmospheric rivers impacted California during Winter 2025–2026.
- Noted overall precipitation and water supply conditions averaged near normal.
- Discussed the possibility of El Niño conditions and forecast uncertainty.
- Forecast above-normal temperatures and elevated fire potential across Northern California.
- Reviewed Fire Weather Watches, Red Flag Warnings, PDS Red Flag Warnings, and Extreme Heat products.

Questions and Discussions

- No formal questions were captured during the presentation.

Fire Integrated Real-Time Intelligence System (FIRIS)

Presenters: AC Robert Scott and Col Michael Martin

Key Discussion Points

- Provided an overview of FIRIS aircraft-based intelligence and situational awareness capabilities.
- Reviewed sensor capabilities including EO, IR, SAR, and LiDAR technologies.
- Discussed expansion from a wildfire-focused mission to an all-hazards statewide capability.
- Highlighted support for damage assessments, earthquakes, floods, landslides, hazardous materials incidents, tsunamis, maritime incidents, and search and rescue.

Questions and Discussion

Question: How real time is the data?

- Raw imagery can often be shared within minutes of collection.
- LiDAR products provide highly detailed information but may require two to three days for processing.

Question: In the future could this be replaced with a drone platform?

- It could be. So, the value of FIRIS is that you have a fire professional on it able to provide a narrative video of what they are seeing.

Question: For tribal partners, are they able to use the FIRIS program if they have a fire department?

- Absolutely.

Question: Damage assessment and FIRIS, for IDE?

- FIRIS supports damage assessment efforts but does not replace official damage assessment processes.

Question: Any way to get an alternate system to contact the FIRIS team, using Teams or Microsoft products instead of Slack, because our IT blocks non-Microsoft messaging platforms?

- If the SOC is activated, APIU will activate and can facilitate information transfer. Having an agency rep in the SOC would be best. Fusion Center can contact EOC and push emails and live data links, so a way can be found in the moment, but maybe not in advance for all partners because of variations in IT security settings by agencies.

Department of General Services' Role in California's Emergency Support System

Presenter: Thomas Ruelas

Key Discussion Points

- Reviewed DGS responsibilities as lead for CA-ESF 3 and CA-ESF 7.
- Discussed procurement, engineering, leasing, fleet, and structural assessment support.
- Emphasized the importance of complete mission task information to expedite resource delivery.
- Highlighted coordination with partner agencies to improve resource support processes.

Questions and Discussion

Question: Once the vendor is in the field operating and coordinating with the field staff, who has control of the vendor?

- Ruelas emphasized routing contractor direction through the DGS liaison to avoid unauthorized costs.

Question: A common myth is that DGS has the money and can figure things out on its own from HQ. So, DGS can just buy the items needed or requested.

- Ruelas explained that emergency procurement activities are closely coordinated with Cal OES Disaster Financial Recovery and Reconciliation unit and the California Department of Finance for funding, tracking, and reimbursement purposes.

Roundtable Discussion

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

- Provided updates on preparedness activities, MHCC monitoring, plan updates, and exercises.

California Government Operations Agency

- Announced and highlighted the newly established California Student Emergency Response Network (CSERN).
- CSERN is a first-of-its-kind 58-county K–12 education mutual aid agreement, which supports resource typing for school facilities, personnel, equipment, and transportation assets to enhance preparedness, response, and recovery capabilities statewide.

Cal OES Tribal Affairs

- Announced the onboarding of Tammy Hasselfeldt-Sepe to support tribal coordination.

California Conservation Corps (CCC)

- Provided updates on exercise support, fire season operations, and development of a Mobile Kitchen Unit.
- Highlighted the CCC's upcoming 50th anniversary beginning July 1.

Closing Remarks

- Attendees were thanked for their participation and continued collaboration.
- Participants were encouraged to provide presentation ideas and recommendations to EFPU.

Next Meeting Tuesday, November 10, 2026