



The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

June 10, 2025

Welcome!

If this was emailed directly to you, great news, you are already on our distribution list! If not please, [subscribe here](#) or use the button at the bottom of this email to be added to our mailing list.

Message from the Chief



Logos for Cal OES, IAEM, CDHSEM, and NYU

All,

As emergency managers, we are constantly striving to improve our practices, preparing to meet the needs of the whole community, including individuals with access and functional considerations. Keys to doing so include learning from each other, sharing experiences, and embracing new ideas that push us toward more inclusive and effective strategies. One fantastic way to do this is by participating in the **4th Annual National Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Symposium**, which will be held virtually on July 9 & 10, 2025, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT each day.

Hosted in partnership by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (CDHSEM), and New York University (NYU), this event drew over 3,200 registrants last year.

This year's Symposium will highlight cutting-edge, inclusive practices in emergency management and showcase innovative efforts from across the country. Attendees will explore effective strategies for integrating emergency management operations to ensure individuals with disabilities and people with access and functional needs are supported before, during, and after disasters.

Bringing together emergency managers, disaster planners, first responders, and members of the disability community, this event strengthens national collaboration and promotes inclusive planning.

American Sign Language, captioning, and Spanish translation services will be available to ensure broad accessibility.

[Please click here to register today!](#)

Looking forward to seeing you online!

Thank you.

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Protect your Health and Safety: Prepare for Power Outages



Image shows two lightbulbs. One is lit, the other is not.

If you, or someone you care about, depends on electricity to operate medical equipment, assistive devices, or to refrigerate medications, it's crucial to plan ahead and be prepared for power outages. This is especially relevant during wildfire season when utilities may proactively utilize Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events.

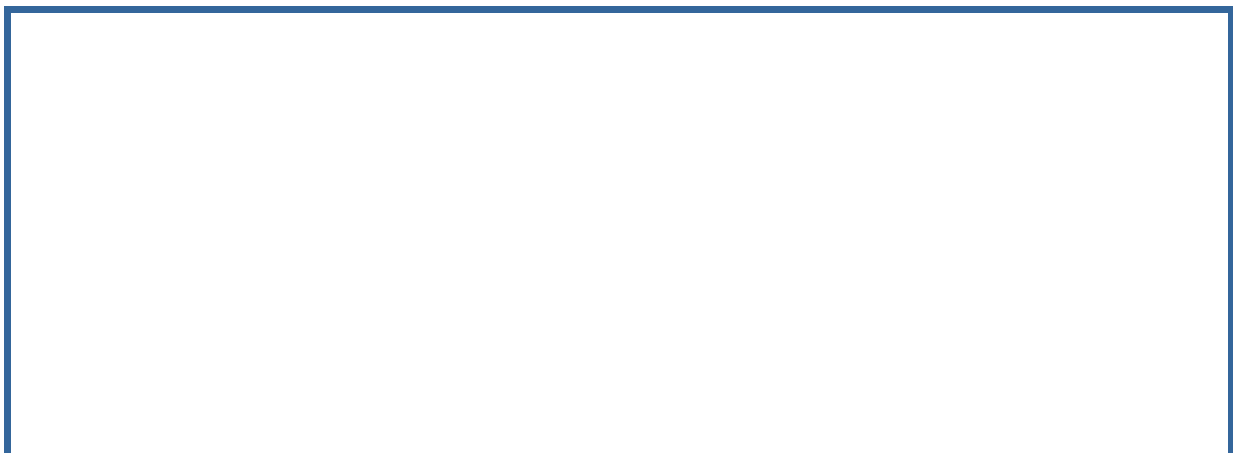
A PSPS event is when power providers de-energize circuits as a precautionary measure to reduce the risk of wildfires during severe weather conditions, such as extreme heat and high winds. While PSPS events are meant to protect communities from wildfires, they can pose serious health and safety risks to individuals who rely on electricity for mobility aids, assistive technology, and powering medical equipment.

The loss of power can disrupt assistive devices, life-sustaining equipment (such as oxygen concentrators or ventilators), and compromise the safety of refrigerated medications. To help mitigate these risks, utilities provide resources (e.g. Medical Baseline Programs) to support eligible customers. These programs can include lower electricity rates, priority notifications during PSPS events, and access to additional assistance before and after power outages.

Individuals who rely on power should visit the [PrepareForPowerDown.com](https://www.prepareforpowerdown.com) website, a go-to resource offering step-by-step instructions on signing up for PSPS event notifications, information about Medical Baseline Programs, and other mitigation plans through Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). The website also contains helpful preparedness checklists, information about backup power options, and FAQs.

Being informed and prepared is essential to protecting your health and safety when the power goes out. Make a plan today!

Emergency Readiness Backpacks Help Californians Prepare for Summer





Graphic of a backpack with emergency preparedness items inside

As summer temperatures rise, more than a thousand emergency-ready backpacks have been distributed to individuals and families at greatest risk for negative outcomes associated with extreme heat. This effort was made possible through a generous donation and a strong partnership with community organizations.

The [Disaster Services Branch of the California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\)](#) played a key role in this effort, collaborating with the [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers \(CFILC\)](#) to distribute these essential backpacks to Independent Living Centers (ILCs) across the state. With their expertise and unwavering commitment to the well-being of all Californians, CDSS ensured the backpacks were stocked with critical emergency items, including flashlights, travel-sized first aid kits, sanitary supplies, and personal protective equipment.

This donation could not have come at a more important time. As emergency preparedness continues to be a priority for Californians, these backpacks offer much more than just essential supplies—they provide peace of mind, knowing that individuals throughout the state are better equipped to stay safe during emergencies. This is an impactful example of the power of inclusive planning, ensuring that individuals with access and functional needs have the resources to stay well when disasters strike.

The effort also highlights the importance of having government partner with community-based organizations, like local ILCs, which have deep ties within the communities they serve. These partnerships not only lead to the distribution of vital resources, they create a foundation for ongoing collaboration that strengthens local preparedness efforts.

Sometimes, a backpack is more than just a backpack—it's a symbol of the strengths of community partnership and inclusive planning, reminding us all that when we come together, we create a safer, more resilient California for everyone.



Image says, "Be Disaster Ready, California - Power Outage"

Planning ahead of outages is the best way to maintain health and safety until power is restored. Check out [Listos California](#) for more tips on what to do before, during, and after power outages.

[SUBSCRIBE / AFN LIBRARY](#)

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services | 3650 Schriever Ave. | Mather, CA 95655 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!