

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

December 20, 2023

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



L. Vance Taylor presenting at the 2023 International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Conference

With 2023 coming to a close, it's a good time to look back, reflect on, and learn from the many disasters that occurred this year.

While some of the events we faced (such as extreme heat) felt familiar, others (such as the combination of a tropical storm and an earthquake) were new. Through it all, California maintained its commitment to working in partnership with the community to identify and address the considerations of individuals with access and functional needs. This commitment is the basis for the State's framework for inclusive emergency management.

Below are a few examples of how the mission to promote and advance inclusive emergency management was integrated within disasters that did not receive the same level of national media coverage as others.

As always, thank you for all you do to make this mission a reality in the lives of the communities you serve.

Thank you!

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

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

The Ferndale Earthquake



Bottles of water being prepped for distribution to the community

When a 6.4 magnitude earthquake rumbled through Humboldt County in December 2022, damaged infrastructure left individuals in the town of Ferndale with limited access to reliable drinking water.

To ensure everyone could receive safe drinking water while infrastructure was being repaired and restored to full operations, Cal OES formed a Drinking Water Task Force. The Task Force included partners from various state agencies, local representatives, and the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN).

Initial plans outlined a process whereby drinking water would be delivered on pallets to a central location within the City of Ferndale. Individuals wanting drinking water could go to the site, take gallon-sized containers as needed, and return as often as required.

Recognizing the initial plan did not fully address the considerations of individuals with access or functional needs who were unable to get to the site, lift gallon-sized containers, or transport them back to their homes – OAFN, through the Drinking Water Task Force, coordinated with local non-profits to make the plan more inclusive.

Through the incredible work of the Task Force and local community-based organizations, the updated plan enabled individuals in need of assistance to call a phone number and have volunteers pick up, and deliver, drinking water from the central distribution site to their place of residence.

In addition to ensuring the delivery of safe drinking water to everyone who needed it, the updated plan created a blueprint for use in future events.

Don't let earthquakes catch you off guard, please visit www.earthquake.ca.gov

The San Bernardino Blizzard



Snowcat vehicle used for rescues in San Bernardino

In February, the National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning for the San Bernardino Mountains. This was the first blizzard warning ever issued in San Bernardino County. As snowfall quickly turned from inches to feet, power outages, impassible roads, and collapsed roofs became a reality for everyone in the impact area. In response, local and state emergency managers, first responders, and community members worked together to clear snow from roads, rooftops, and sidewalks.

The Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) worked with partners to organize and operationalize wellness checks to identify and address the needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and

people with other access and functional considerations in the impacted area.

OAFN also partnered with the San Bernardino Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and the Cal OES Office of Private Sector/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Coordination to help facilitate the evacuation of individuals with access and functional needs in Crestline, CA.

For tips on snow and cold weather safety, please check out www.listocalifornia.org/stormseason

A “Milder” Wildfire Season



Smoke and fire in the Inyo National Forest

The devastating impact wildfires have on life safety, the destruction of property, and damage to infrastructure is undeniable. So too is the disproportionate impact wildfires have on individuals with access and functional needs. As such, throughout the year, the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) has been sharing key preparedness and safety information resources throughout the whole community.

A combination of factors (e.g., increased moisture from rain events, the innovative use of new artificial intelligence tools, and the strategic pre-positioning of resources) helped California through a milder wildfire season in 2023. The importance of establishing personal evacuation plans, signing up for local emergency alerts, and putting together go-bags, cannot be overstated.

OAFN is proud to continue working with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and a magnificent myriad of partners to help prepare all Californians for wildfires.

Visit the Cal OES [AFN Web Map](#) to see a live view of the current wildfires the State is tracking.



From all of us at the **Office of Access and Functional Needs**, may the upcoming year be filled with fresh possibilities, joyous adventures, and increased preparedness, safety, and resilience!

OAFN Team Photo

SUBSCRIBE / AFN LIBRARY

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

[Unsubscribe vance.taylor@caloes.ca.gov](mailto:vance.taylor@caloes.ca.gov)

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

Sent by vance.taylor@caloes.ca.gov powered by



Try email marketing for free today!