

# The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

September 6, 2023

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## Message from the Chief

L. Vance Taylor presenting at an emergency preparedness training workshop.



All, California is in the midst of another challenging fire season and high temperatures, low humidity, and lightning strikes are expected to persist throughout the summer.

With the entire state on high alert, it is especially vital that individuals with access and functional needs, who are often at greater risk for negative outcomes associated with wildfires, take proactive actions and get prepared.

As intense and devastating as wildfires can be, there are proven measures individuals can take to get prepared and reduce the risk of human suffering and loss of life.

Here are some important steps individuals and communities can take to enhance wildfire preparedness today:

- **Create an Emergency Plan:** Develop a comprehensive personal

emergency plan that includes evacuation routes, meeting points, and communication methods. Make sure your support networks are aware of the plan and practice it regularly. Visit the [AFN Disaster Preparedness Guide](#) for more information.

- **Emergency Kit:** Prepare an emergency kit containing essentials like non-perishable food, water, medications, clothing, important documents, flashlights, batteries, and a first aid kit. Check out these [Tips to get your Go-Bag ready](#).
- **Stay Informed:** Keep yourself informed about fire conditions by monitoring local news, radio, and official social media channels. Sign up for emergency alerts and notifications from local authorities at [calalerts.org](http://calalerts.org).
- **Evacuation Readiness:** Know your community's evacuation routes and have a plan for where you will go if you need to leave your home. Keep your vehicle fueled or have a local transportation service number readily available. For ideas, you can view the [Integrated Evacuation Planning for Jurisdictions and Individuals with Access and Functional Needs Guide](#).

Take time out today to prepare for safety!

Thank you.

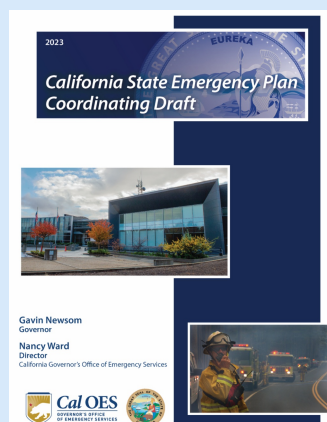
-Vance

**L. Vance Taylor**

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

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## State Emergency Plan (SEP) Draft Open for Public Comment



The [California State Emergency Plan \(SEP\)](#) plays a key role in guiding state agencies, local jurisdictions, and the public on emergency

management. It describes the methods for conducting emergency operations, rendering mutual aid, emergency response capabilities of state agencies, resource mobilization, public information, and continuity of government during an emergency or disaster.

As Cal OES continues its update of the SEP, it remains committed to inclusion. To ensure the plan serves the needs of all Californians, including individuals with access and functional considerations, the agency has been working with community stakeholders and partners throughout the update process.

The SEP is currently open for public review and comment until September 15, 2023. If you are interested in reviewing the draft SEP, please visit [www.caloes.ca.gov](http://www.caloes.ca.gov) or [click here](#). If you would like to add a comment to the SEP, please complete the [public comment form](#).

## Accessible Cooling Center Guidance

An entrance sign to a California Cooling Center



As extreme heat events become more commonplace, ensuring physical and programmatic accessibility at Cooling Centers is essential to the mission of saving lives.

To support jurisdictions as they plan for, and operate, accessible Cooling Centers that can serve people with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs in an inclusive and equitable manner, Cal OES has officially released the "Accessible Cooling Center Guide." The guide is available for download on the [AFN Library](#) via the following link: [Accessible Cooling Centers Guidance](#).

This inclusive guide was developed in partnership with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC); the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Office of Health Equity and Center for Preparedness and Response (OHECPR); the California

## Planning for Service Animal Safety

As you create a personal preparedness plan for extreme heat events, be mindful to address the risk extreme heat poses for service animals.

Service animals play a crucial role in the lives of many individuals with disabilities and can be an essential resource for maintaining personal health, safety, and independence.

Planning with the following tips in mind can help ensure the safety of service animals during extreme heat events:

- **Hydration Matters.** Just like humans, service animals need to stay hydrated in the heat. Keep water accessible for service animals, place water bowls in convenient locations, consider using automatic water dispensers, and train them to drink on command.
- **Avoid Hot Pavement.** During extreme heat events, pavement and sidewalks can become dangerously hot and may burn the paws of service animals. Using booties will protect paws from burning or being injured from overheated surfaces.
- **Watch for Signs of Heatstroke.** Service animals can suffer from heatstroke, which can be life-threatening. Watch for signs such as excessive panting, lethargy, drooling, vomiting, and rapid pulse. If you suspect your service animal may be having a heatstroke, get to a cooler place, provide water, and seek veterinary care immediately.

Remember, small adjustments and planning go a long way to increase the safety and protection of service animals during extreme heat events.

### Did you miss the National AFN Symposium?

You can still see it! Over 2,800 people registered to learn from emergency managers, community leaders, and subject matter experts from across the country.

To view individual sessions of the Symposium, or to see the event in its entirety, use the following link or click on the thumbnail below:

[Video - 2023 Access and Functional Needs Symposium](#)



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