

State of California
CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
Fire and Rescue Division

OPERATIONS BULLETIN # 45

Subject: Expedited Resource Response (ERR) Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

The Expedited Resource Response (ERR) Policy establishes a statewide mechanism that enables local fire agencies to rapidly request, mobilize, and exchange significant numbers of ground and air resources when confronted with emergent, high-risk incidents. The objective of this policy is to provide a streamlined process outside of standard mutual aid ordering systems to ensure immediate resource movement in conditions where delayed action would significantly jeopardize life, property, or critical infrastructure.

This policy formalizes a scalable, statewide expedited process designed to operate within all Operational Areas in California, improving the effectiveness and responsiveness of the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System.

2.0 JUSTIFICATION AND NEED

California's existing resource-mobilization systems, including IROC and traditional mutual aid pathways, are not always capable of delivering the speed required during rapidly escalating emergencies, particularly wind-driven wildland fires, major all-hazards incidents, and other immediate-threat situations. Several catastrophic events, reinforced by After-Action Reports, demonstrate the critical need to rapidly deploy large numbers of engines, water tenders, strike teams, and aviation assets within the first 1–2 operational periods. Establishing this policy helps leverage California's exceptionally robust fire service capacity by creating a clear, authorized mechanism for immediate resource movement when conditions demand it, reducing delays and mitigating preventable statewide losses.

The ERR policy addresses this operational gap.

3.0 SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all local government fire agencies in California, regardless of region, size, or prior participation in any pilot programs.

Until superseded, it is intended to function as a statewide resource-mobilization option and does not replace Master Mutual Aid or standard ordering systems; instead, it supplements them for incidents where time-critical response is required. Oversight and coordination are provided by **Cal OES Fire and Rescue**.

4.0 CONDITIONS FOR INITIATING AN ERR REQUEST

ERR may be initiated when a local fire chief (or designee) determines that:

- A rapidly evolving incident poses an actual, imminent, or immediate threat to life, property, or critical infrastructure; and
- The speed of resource movement required cannot be met through traditional mutual aid or IROC processes; and
- An immediate exchange or deployment of significant resources (e.g., multiple engine companies, strike teams, hand crews, dozers, aircraft) is necessary to mitigate imminent impacts.

Eligible incident types include, but are not limited to:

- Wind-driven wildfires threatening populated areas
- All-hazards incidents (earthquake, infrastructure failure, flooding, civil unrest)
- Situations where delayed response would likely lead to catastrophic loss

Ineligible incident types:

- Out-of-state assignments or international deployments

5.0 Authorized Activities and Process

The following steps outline the ERR activation and resource exchange process:

5.1 Initiation

- A verbal request may be made directly between fire chiefs (or authorized designees) of participating agencies.
- The requesting agency must immediately notify the Cal OES Fire and Rescue Chief (or designee) of the initiation and justification.

5.2 Confirmation

- The providing agency's fire chief must follow the verbal request with a confirmation email, copying the Cal OES Fire and Rescue Chief.

5.3 Mobilization

- Resources deployed through ERR will initially be considered Master Mutual Aid (MMA) to ensure the fastest mobilization.
- The **Fire Chief or designee** of the requesting agency advises the Incident Commander and/or the Operations Section Chief that the following ERR resources are being deployed as part of the ERR request and **will track** the assisting resources.
 - Unit or Strike Team identifier.
- Responding ERR resources will be provided (with a minimum of):
 - Command Frequency
 - Reporting location
 - Reporting contact

- Mobilized resources should be entered into IROC as soon as practical after approval.
- Financial Code: MMA/ERR

5.4 Reimbursement

- If an ERR resource is retained after the imminent, or immediate threat to life, property, or critical infrastructure is mitigated and converted to a reimbursable agreement (e.g., CFAA), the resource order form documentation and financial code must be updated to reflect the change. Until the transition of agreement occurs, the resource shall remain assigned and administered under this policy.
 - Documentation Example: *“Agreement changed from ERR/MMA to CFAA starting at 05/31/26 at 0800”*
- Cal OES will assist in facilitating the proper reimbursement for ERR-mobilized resources if applicable.

5.5 Resource Release

- Local Fire Agencies receiving ERR resources shall continually evaluate conditions and release resources back to providing agencies when:
 - The actual, imminent, or immediate threat has been mitigated, **or**
 - The assisting agency Fire Chief requires their resource(s) returned.
- Resources not retained in accordance with Section 5.4 shall be demobilized and returned to the providing agency as soon as practical.
- Resources assigned under ERR/MMA do not require a formal demobilization process.

5.6 Resource Reassignment

- Resources may be reassigned to a new incident when:
 - A new or emerging threat occurs within the mutual aid system, **and**
 - The resource home agency approves the reassignment.
- Resources not reassigned shall be returned to the providing agency as soon as practical.

6.0 Systemwide Benefits

Adoption of the ERR policy will enhance statewide operational readiness by:

- Ensuring fire agencies can rapidly surge resources during emergent conditions
 - Reducing delays that contribute to large-scale losses
 - Strengthening resilience within and across Operational Areas
 - Enhancing support for communities statewide
 - Improving coordination and interoperability through standardized processes
- Most importantly, this policy supports the core mission of protecting life, property, and the environment throughout California.

7.0 Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Participating agencies must evaluate ERR activations and document:

- Operational effectiveness
- Lessons learned
- Challenges and recommended policy adjustments

After each use of this method, the Cal OES Region Coordinator or dispatch center will jointly complete a [survey form](#) documenting their observations.

The ERR policy and process may be modified at any time based on operational experience, resource availability, statewide needs, and emerging threats.

8.0 Reporting and Presentation of Outcomes

Milestones, lessons learned, evaluations, and proposed changes will be presented to:

- Cal OES Fire Service Advisory Committee
- FIRESCOPE Board of Directors
- Other statewide fire service governance bodies as appropriate

ERR Survey QR Code

