



# Preparing and Protecting California

## *Elected Official's Guide to Emergencies in California*



2021



***Cal* OES**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

# WHO IS CAL OES?

Cal OES protects lives and property, builds capabilities, and supports our communities for a resilient California.



The agency serves the public through effective collaboration in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating the impacts of all hazards and threats.

With over 39.5 million residents, the State of California is the **most populous state** and the **third largest by land area** (163,695 square miles) in the nation. Our state has endured many high profile disasters in recent years, including wildfires, a severe drought, floods, and earthquakes, that have ravaged our land and displaced hundreds of thousands of residents.

Cal OES takes a proactive approach in **planning for, responding to, recovering from** and **mitigating the impacts of natural and man-made disasters**. The office has been extensively tested through real events, as well as comprehensive exercises, that help to maintain a state of readiness within California and Cal OES.



# YOUR ROLE

## YOUR LEADERSHIP IS VITAL TO PUBLIC SAFETY

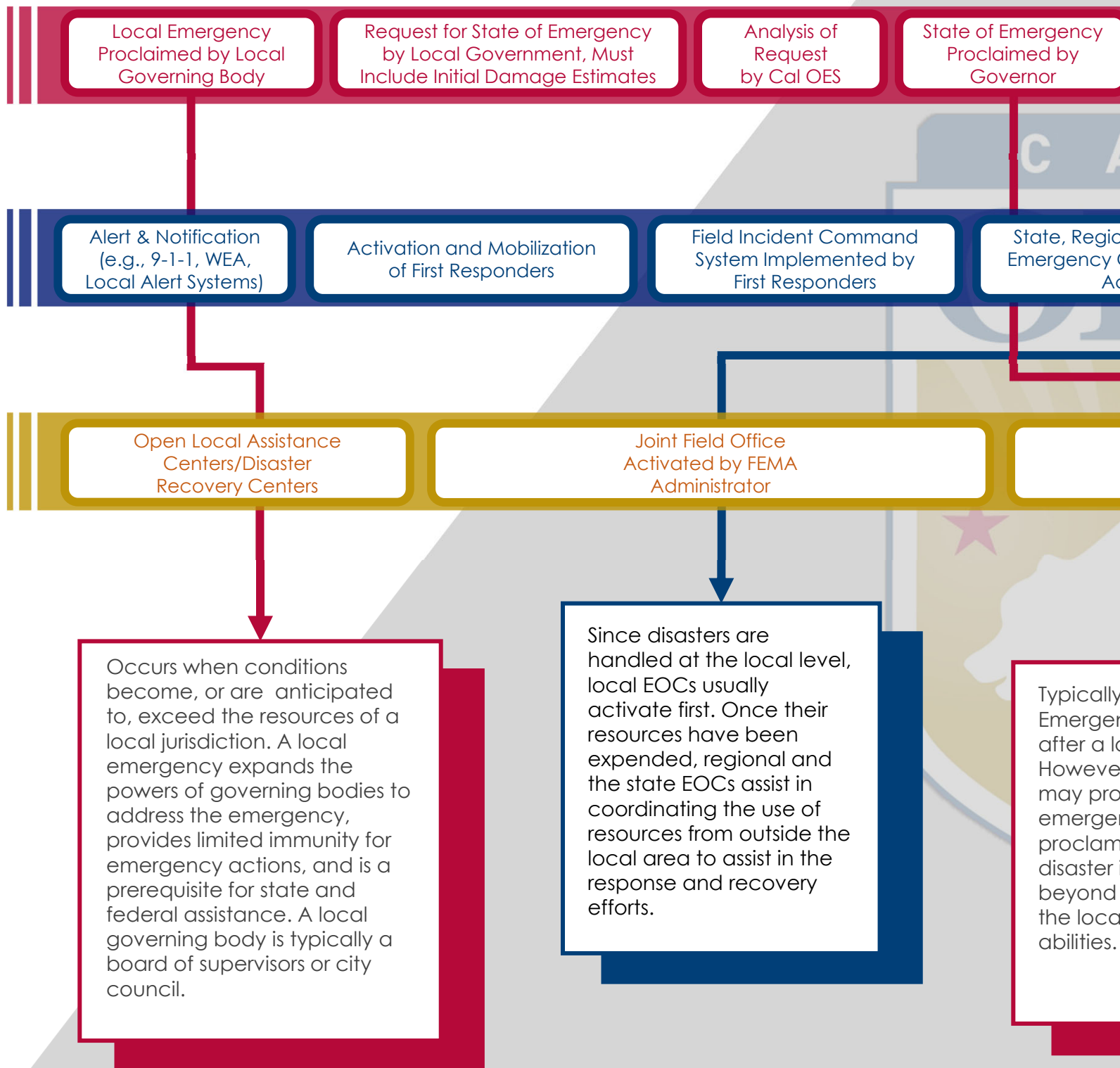
- **You play a crucial role in public safety.** Your understanding and support of emergency management is vital to the safety and well-being of the public and our communities. Emergency management is a critical government function from planning and preparedness through long-term disaster recovery and mitigation efforts.
- **Before a disaster occurs** elected officials are encouraged to meet with their emergency management officials and establish solid relationships, learn about emergency plans and procedures, and visit the emergency operations center and other critical facilities.
- **During times of crisis**, elected officials can be a valuable asset to their communities by having a clear understanding of how government responds to emergencies and disasters, what resources are available, what types of assistance can be provided to citizens, and how much time it may take to deliver the assistance.
- **Policy makers have a responsibility** to make decisions that will ensure the safety of their constituents and communities. Land use and building code decisions that factor in fire potential and other significant disaster hazards can help contribute to increased public safety.
- **Be aware** of hazards in your area. Cal OES's Emergency Notification System helps keep you updated with daily situation reports. Use the process in the back of this guide to receive updates for counties in your district.

## LEADERSHIP BEFORE DISASTERS STRIKE

- Meet with your emergency management team to learn about potential hazards in your jurisdiction and what is being done to address them.
- Learn about emergency management, disaster assistance services, as well as their limitations.
- Encourage constituents and businesses to develop an emergency plan and be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
- Encourage all government agencies and business leaders to coordinate and collaborate with your emergency management agency.
- Visit your jurisdiction's emergency operations center.

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN DIS

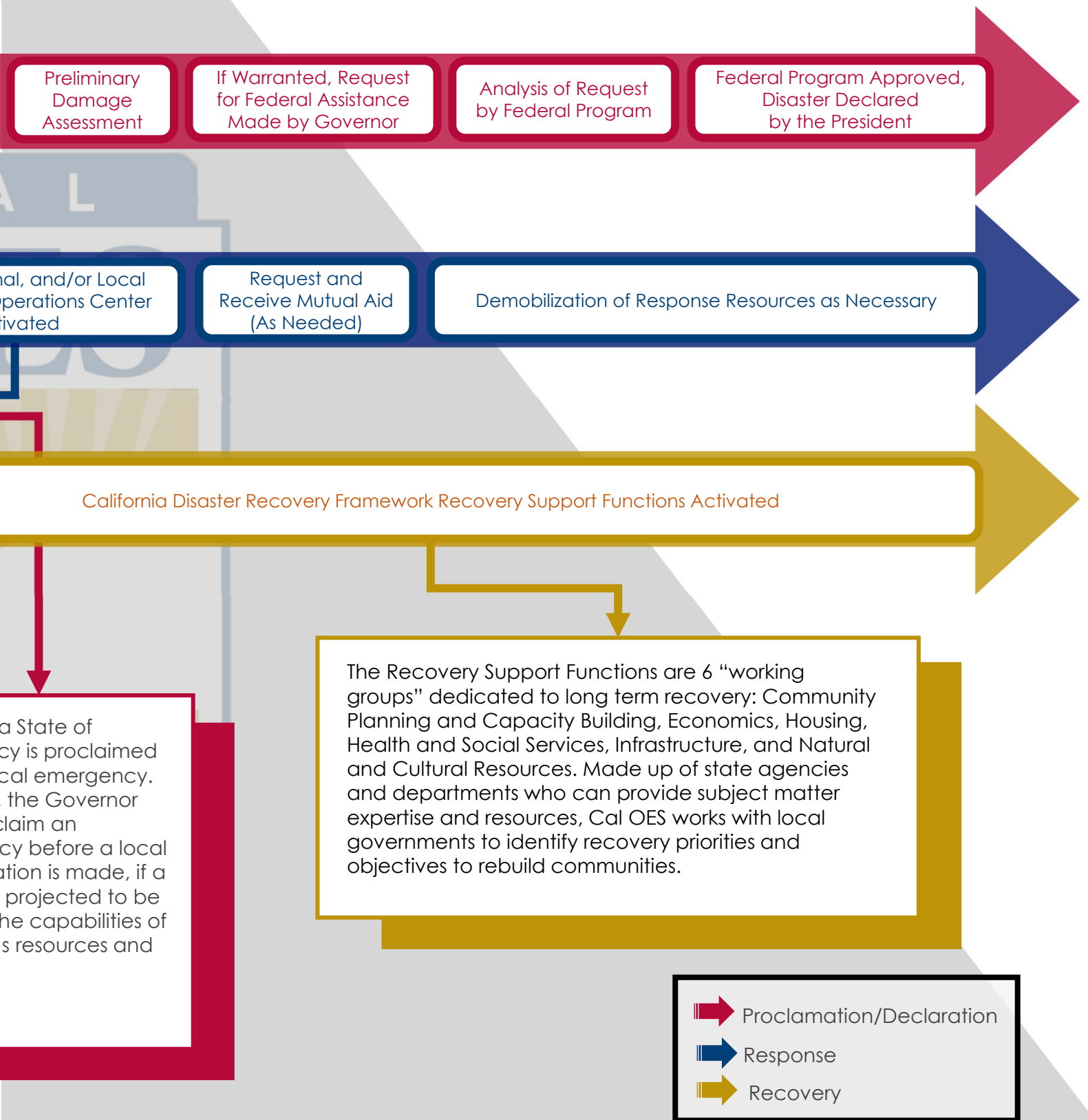
## SEQUENCE OF KEY EVENTS IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT\*



\*Each disaster is unique. The sequence and duration of key events may



# DISASTER STRIKES



# DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

THERE ARE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMERGENCIES

## Local Emergency

- Proclaimed by the **governing body of a local government**. Occurs when conditions become, or are anticipated to, exceed the resources of a local jurisdiction.

## State of Emergency

- Proclaimed by the **Governor** when conditions exceed the control of local government and require the combined forces of mutual aid regions.

## Presidential Declaration of Emergency

- Declared by the **President** following Governor's provision of information that state and local resources have been tasked and specific federal aid is needed.

## Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster

- Declared by the **President** at request of the Governor. California must meet various conditions. Provides a wide range of federal assistance programs for individuals and public infrastructure.

## Fire Management Assistance Declaration

- Declared by **FEMA** on a state request for an uncontrolled fire threatening destruction that would constitute a major disaster.

## USDA Emergency Designation

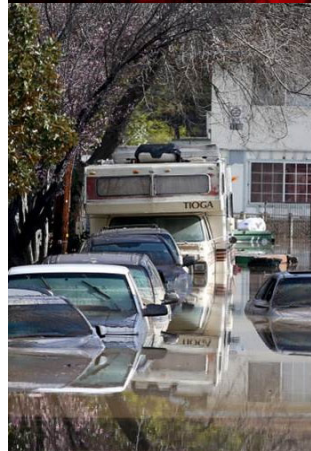
- USDA disaster designations for agricultural-related disasters must be requested of the Secretary of Agriculture by the governor, Tribal Council leader or Farm Service Agency Executive Director.

## Public Health Emergency Declaration

- Public health emergencies must show the event impacts the community in such a manner defined by the California Health and Safety Code section 101080.

## US Small Business Administration Declaration

- When the SBA makes a disaster declaration, the SBA disaster loan program is activated for homeowners, renters, and business owners for uninsured or uncompensated losses.





# AFTER THE DISASTER

## FEDERAL AND STATE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

Program	Provided Through	Program Criteria
<b>Fire Management Assistance Grant</b>	FEMA	Grants to state, local and tribal governments for the mitigation, management, and control of fires on forests or grasslands, which threaten destruction that would constitute a major disaster.
<b>Federal Public Assistance Grants</b>	FEMA	Grants to state, local and tribal governments (minimum of 75% of eligible costs) for debris removal, life-saving emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged publicly-owned and certain private nonprofit organization facilities.
<b>Hazard Mitigation Grant Program</b>	FEMA	Grants to state, local and tribal governments for implementing mitigation measures after a disaster and to provide funding for previously identified mitigation measures to lessen future damage and loss of life.
<b>Individuals and Households Program</b>	FEMA	Grants to eligible individuals and households for necessary expenses or serious needs. May be implemented upon a Presidential declaration that includes Individual Assistance. Grants may currently not exceed \$34,900 per person or household. Assistance is limited to 18 months.
<b>Disaster Unemployment Assistance</b>	US Dept. of Labor	With a Presidentially Declared Disaster, generally provides 26 weeks of disaster unemployment assistance for workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals who lost their jobs/could not work as a result of the event.
<b>US SBA Physical Disaster Loans</b>	SBA	Low-interest loans to businesses and private nonprofits to repair or replace damaged/destroyed real estate, and business assets. Loans to homeowners and renters to repair/replace disaster-damaged real estate and personal property.
<b>US SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans</b>	SBA	Loans of up to \$2 million for small businesses and private nonprofit organizations that have suffered economic injury and are located within a disaster declared county or contiguous county.
<b>Emergency Disaster Loan</b>	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency	Low interest crop production loss and physical loss loans for producers within, or contiguous to, a county with a disaster declaration from the President or USDA, when there is at least 30% crop production loss, or a physical loss of livestock products, land, or chattel property.
<b>California Disaster Assistance Act</b>	Cal OES	State funding to local governments for up to 75% of eligible costs. More information in Frequently Asked Questions.
<b>Supplemental Grant Program</b>	California Dept. of Social Services	Grants up to \$10,000 to individuals and families when there is a Presidential Disaster Declaration that includes the Individuals and Households Program and the applicant has received the maximum amount from FEMA and still has unmet serious and necessary expenses. No separate application process and is referred from FEMA.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUEST



## How is a Local Emergency Proclamation enacted?

- A “**local emergency**” is **proclaimed by a local governing body** (e.g. a board of supervisors or city council) when a disaster or other conditions exist that may cause harm to people and property occurs within the territorial limits of a county, city, and county and city, and those conditions exceed, or have the potential to exceed, local resources and capabilities. A local emergency expands the powers of governing bodies to address the emergency, provides limited immunity for emergency actions, and is a prerequisite for state and federal assistance.

## What is a Governor’s Proclamation of a State of Emergency?

- **When emergency conditions exceed, or have the potential to exceed, local resources and capabilities**, a local jurisdiction may request the Governor proclaim a State of Emergency under the California Emergency Services Act. The Governor can proclaim a State of Emergency if the safety of persons and property in California are threatened by conditions of extreme peril, or if the emergency conditions are beyond the emergency response capacity and capabilities of the local authorities.

## Does the Governor have expanded emergency powers during a proclaimed State of Emergency?

- Yes, during a proclaimed State of Emergency the Governor:
  - Has the right to exercise **police power**, as deemed necessary, vested in the State Constitution and the laws of California within the designated area.
  - Is vested with the power to **use and commandeer public and private property and personnel** to ensure all resources within California are available and dedicated to the emergency when requested.
  - Can **direct all state agencies to utilize and employ personnel, equipment, and facilities** for the performance of any and all activities designed to prevent or alleviate actual and threatened damage due to the emergency.
  - May **make, amend, or rescind orders and regulations** during an emergency and temporarily suspend any non-safety related statutes, ordinances, regulations, or rules that impose restrictions on the emergency response activities.

## Under the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA), what benefits are available when there are conditions of disaster or extreme peril?

- CDAA Director's Concurrence
  - Based on a Local Emergency Proclamation that has been accepted by the Cal OES Director, a local agency may receive reimbursement (up to 75 percent) for **permanent repair, replacement, or restoration costs** for disaster-damaged facilities. The remaining 25 percent cost-share is the responsibility of local government.
- CDAA Governor's Proclamation
  - When the Governor proclaims an emergency due to conditions of disaster or extreme peril beyond the control of local government and the combined forces of a mutual aid response and authorizes CDAA, the state can fund local agencies for **debris removal, emergency activities, infrastructure restoration costs, and certain private non-profits for critical services** provided.





State Operations Center

# IONS

## What is the purpose of a Presidential Declaration of Emergency or Major Disaster and how is it triggered?

- When it is clear state capabilities will be exceeded, the Governor can request federal assistance, including assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). The Stafford Act authorizes the **President to provide financial and other assistance to state and local governments, certain private nonprofit organizations, and individuals** to support response, recovery, and mitigation efforts following a Presidential Declaration of Emergency or Major Disaster Declaration. The Governor must request a Presidential Declaration of Emergency on behalf of local government within 5 days after the need for federal emergency assistance is apparent and a Major Disaster Declaration within 30 days of the incident.

## How are requests for Presidential Declarations evaluated and how long does the process take?

- Upon submission of the request, FEMA conducts a Preliminary Damage Assessment with Cal OES to determine if the incident is of sufficient severity to require federal assistance under the Stafford Act and makes a recommendation to the President through the Federal Department of Homeland Security. The **decision to approve the request is based on the amount and type of damage, potential needs of the affected jurisdiction(s) and state, availability of state and local government resources, the extent and type of insurance in effect, recent disaster history and the state's hazard mitigation history.** This process could take a few days to a few weeks depending on the magnitude of the incident. If the incident is so severe that the damage is overwhelming and immediately apparent, the President may declare a Major Disaster immediately.

## Who is in charge during an emergency or disaster?

- The Incident Commander** sets the objectives and approves the strategy and tactics to be used for the incident. The Incident Commander will be a high-ranking official of whichever local agency has the lead role in the incident (Fire, Law Enforcement, Public Health, etc.).

## What can my constituents do to be more prepared for an emergency?

- Individuals, families and businesses should **develop an emergency plan and be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.** It is important that individuals and families create an emergency supply kit with food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days, have a plan of action should an emergency occur, and, most importantly, be informed about potential hazards and how to prepare for them. Encourage your constituents to review preparedness tips on the Cal OES website at [www.caloes.ca.gov](http://www.caloes.ca.gov).

## What is the process for individuals, households, and businesses to request assistance in the aftermath of a disaster?

- The California Emergency Services Act designates each county as an Operational Area to coordinate the emergency activities and resources of its political subdivisions. Once a local declaration of emergency has been made, **damage information should be reported to the local Emergency Services Office.** It is the responsibility of the local office to collect and report local disaster damage to Cal OES. Information regarding the recovery process can be found at [www.caloes.ca.gov/For-Individuals-Families](http://www.caloes.ca.gov/For-Individuals-Families).

# CALIFORNIA STATE WARNING CENTER

STAFFED 24 HOURS A DAY, 365 DAYS A YEAR

The California State Warning Center (CSWC) is responsible for receiving, coordinating, verifying, and disseminating information pertaining to events within, or could affect, California. In 2018, staff in CSWC handled over 74,000 calls and more than 96,000 actionable incoming emails. The CSWC also received about 10,000 hazardous material spills reports, which resulted in more than 395,000 spill notifications to federal, state, and local government agencies. In addition, CSWC made over 1,155,000 notifications due to weather related warnings, fires, seismic events, and other potential events with emergency management impacts.



1963: California's Emergency  
Operating Center Radio Room

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## California's SEMS is so successful it has become the basis of the National Incident Management System

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California uses the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) to facilitate communication during an emergency or disaster. This standardized system is the cornerstone of California's emergency response system and was created by state law after the devastating Oakland Fire Storm in 1991. The system unifies all elements of California's emergency management community into a single integrated system and standardizes key functions,



2019: California State Warning Center

which include management, operations, logistics, planning and intelligence, and finance and administration. It increases efficiencies and strengthens mutual aid response.

SEMS is required by the California Emergency Services Act for managing multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional responses in California. State agencies are required to use SEMS and local government entities must use SEMS to be eligible for reimbursement of response-related costs.

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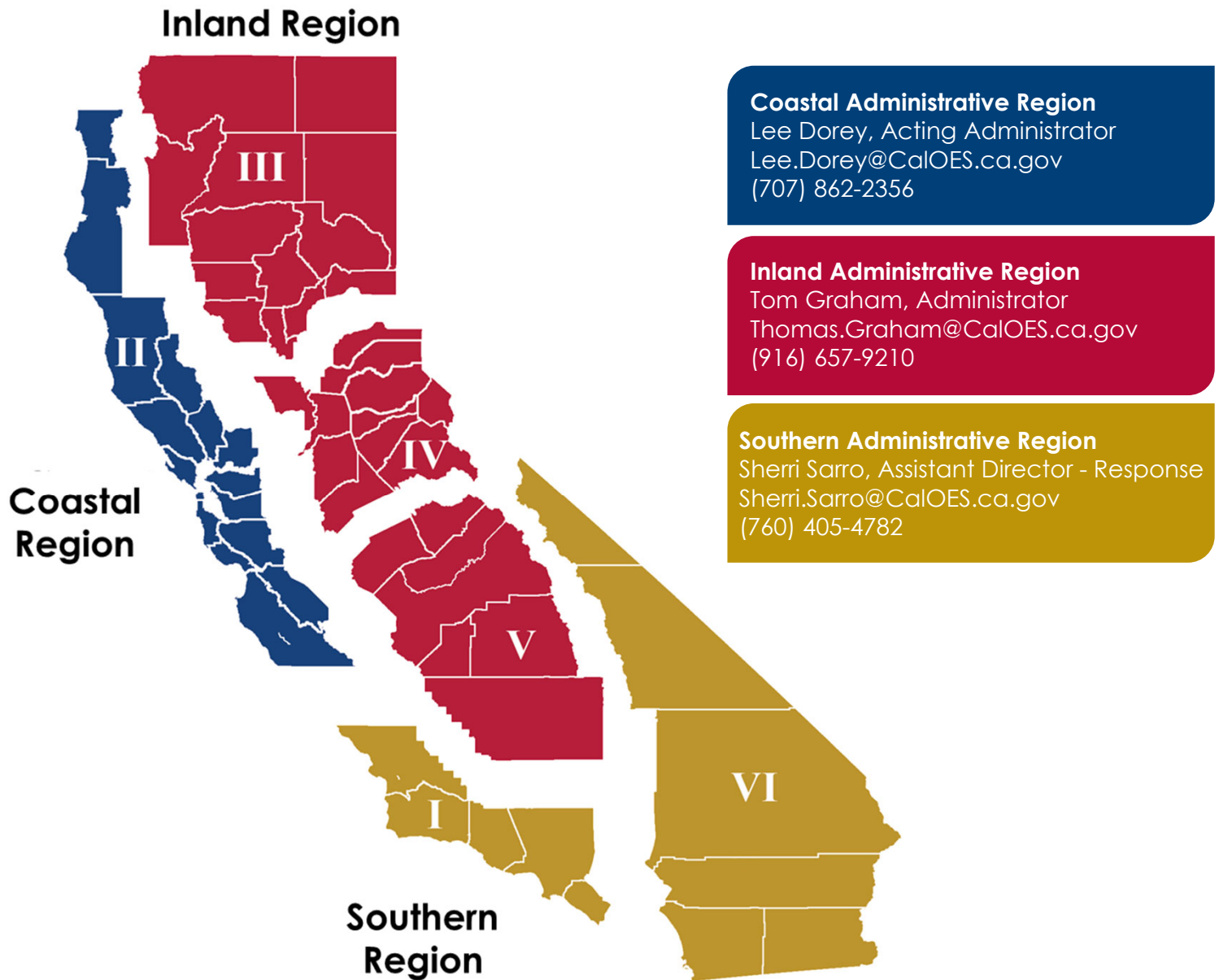
## Emergency management begins well before CSWC takes action

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When there is an immediate threat or actual emergency, **local governments have the primary responsibility to implement emergency plans and take critical actions to mitigate or reduce the emergency threat.** Actions include the timely deployment of law enforcement, fire fighting services, and field-level emergency response personnel and the activation of emergency operations centers and issuing orders to protect the public. Cities and counties have ordinances that establish an emergency organization and local disaster council. The ordinances provide for the development of an emergency plan, establishment of responsibilities for emergency management operations, and specification of officials authorized to proclaim a local emergency.

# CAL OES REGIONS

CALIFORNIA IS DIVIDED INTO ADMINISTRATIVE & MUTUAL AID REGIONS



## Administrative Regions

These three regions carry out the coordination of information and resources **within the region, as well as between the state and regional levels** to ensure effective and efficient support to local response.

## Mutual Aid Regions (I-VI)

The six regions manage and coordinate information and resources **among counties**, also known as operational areas, within their regional borders and between the operational areas and Cal OES.





# *Cal* OES

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

*Preparing and Protecting California*

## **HEADQUARTERS**

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## **SOCIAL MEDIA**



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