California State Emergency Plan 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the State Emergency Plan?

Answer: The California State Emergency Plan (SEP) plays a key role in guiding state agencies, local jurisdictions, and the public on emergency management by providing a high level, comprehensive description of the State of California's organization and methods for dealing with emergencies through all phases - preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. It describes the state's emergency operations, mutual aid system, emergency response capabilities, resource mobilization, public information, and continuity of government during an emergency.

The SEP also outlines mitigation programs to reduce vulnerabilities, disaster preparedness programs, identifies state threats and hazards, and discusses coordination and participation of emergency management with the whole-community.

Question: Why is the plan being updated?

Answer: The previous SEP was published in 2017. The California Emergency Services Act (ESA) requires the SEP be updated on a five-year cycle. Since 2017, California has continued to experience states of emergency for wildfires, flooding, mudslides, earthquakes, severe storms, drought, power shutoffs, a global pandemic, and more. Updating and maintaining the SEP is crucial to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services' mission to protect lives, build capabilities, and foster resilient communities.

Question: Why is it called "SEP 2024" when it was published in 2025?

Answer: The finalized draft of the SEP was completed in Fall 2024. It then went through Cal OES Executive and the Governor's Office for review, which was completed in Fall 2025. So, even though the SEP was reviewed and approved in 2025, it is based on the SEP draft finalized in 2024.

Question: Why did SEP 2024 miss the 5-year planning cycle required by the ESA?

Answer: Based on the ESA, SEP 2017 should have been updated and completed in 2022. Statewide disaster response, more comprehensive descriptions of Cal OES programs, and robust feedback during the public comment period all caused greater than previously predicted increases in the plan's development time. First, COVID-19 and various statewide disasters delayed work on the SEP as Cal OES and various state partners were focused on emergency work. Second, the increased size of Cal OES and better integration of its various programs (such as Recovery) within the SEP increased the size of the document compared to previous versions. Finally, Cal OES received 80% more feedback during the SEP's public comment period compared to what was received in 2017, requiring planning staff to devote additional time to reviewing and adding content to the SEP.

Question: What changes are included in this update?

Answer: The more important changes to the SEP are that it:

- Incorporates the whole community planning approach.
- Has updated hazards discussion with focus on wildfires, volcanic events, earthquakes, pandemics, severe weather, dam failures, PSPS events, and cyberattacks.
- Adds information on Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review.
- Adds information on the Fire and Rescue Coordination Center, Air Coordination Group, Medical and Health Coordination Center, and the Logistics Support Team.
- Adds information on the Unified Coordination Group.
- Updates the Recovery Operations Section.
- Adds the California Disaster Recovery Framework.
- Adds a new section on the Recovery Support Functions.
- Updates and refreshes the state agency roles and responsibilities section.