



News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (10/1/21)

California Incident Summary

[CAL FIRE](#) has an incidents page on their website that provides interactive maps, with up-to-date information regarding various disasters happening throughout the state. To view their incidents page, [please follow this link](#).

Governor Newsom Proclaims State of Emergency in Shasta County Due to Fawn Fire

[Governor Newsom proclaimed](#) Monday a state of emergency for Shasta County to support the response to the Fawn Fire, which has to date burned 8,559 acres, destroying homes and causing the evacuation of thousands of residents.

Last week, California secured a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help ensure the availability of vital resources to suppress the Fawn Fire.

The text of last week's proclamation can be found [here](#).

Windy Fire: Some Evacuation Orders Reduced to Warnings; Wildfire at 35% Containment

[ABC 30 reports](#) several Windy Fire evacuees are preparing to head home on Thursday as Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux downgrades many evacuation orders to warnings.

The Highway 190 corridor will open at noon, so residents who live in warning areas will be allowed to return. That includes Alpine Village, Camp Nelson, Cedar Slope, Coy Flat, Pierpoint, Ponderosa, Quaking Aspen and Sequoia Crest.

Officials also reopened Mineral King Drive between Highway 198 and Oak Grove Bridge including Crest, Sierra King, Hammond, and Oak Grove.

You will need proof of residence and an ID before deputies will let you back in.

On a Facebook stream Wednesday night, officials said they hope to get all residents back to their homes soon.

"We do want to get you back in as soon as we can. We're all working very hard toward that goal, but we want to make sure it is safe to get you back into your homes. We have active fire, trees

coming down, rolling debris, and we still have emergency vehicles out there on the roads," said Eric Laprice.

Officials say nearby Mountain Aire and Rogers Camp will remain closed under evacuation orders for now, and all other evacuation orders are still in effect.

The Windy fire is now 35% contained and has charred more than 88-thousand acres in the Sequoia National Forest.

Progress Made on California Fire that Displaced Thousands

[NBC Bay Area reports](#) firefighters were gaining the upper hand Sunday on a forest fire that displaced thousands of people and destroyed more than 100 buildings near Shasta Lake in Northern California.

Lighter winds and cooler temperatures slowed the Fawn Fire as it moves toward the shores of California's largest man-made lake and away from populated areas north of the city of Redding, allowing crews to increase containment to 35%, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said in a statement.

The fire at one point threatened 9,000 buildings, but the number dropped to 2,340 on Sunday.

Light rain was in the forecast for Monday. Fire officials said crews will begin taking advantage of the calmer weather to conduct back burns near the lake to expand the control lines, [the Record Searchlight reported](#).

Initial assessments found that 131 homes and other buildings had burned, CalFire said. That number was likely to change as teams go street by street surveying the destruction.

The Fawn Fire has charred more than 13 square miles (34 square kilometers) of heavy timber.

It's the latest destructive blaze to send Californians fleeing this year. Fires have burned more than 3,750 square miles (9,712 square kilometers) so far in 2021, destroying more than 3,200 homes, commercial properties and other structures.

Those fires include a pair of big forest blazes burning for more than two weeks in the heart of giant sequoia country on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. More than 1,700 firefighters battled the KNP Complex Fires, which covered 70 square miles (181 square kilometers) by Sunday.

Nearby, the Windy Fire grew significantly Saturday as it made uphill runs and winds blew embers that ignited spot fires. The blaze ignited by lightning on Sept. 9 has scorched 122 square miles (317 square kilometers) of trees and brush on the Tule River Indian Reservation and in Sequoia National Forest. Containment shrunk from 5% to 2% Sunday.

A historic drought in the American West tied to climate change is making wildfires harder to fight. It has killed millions of trees in California alone. Scientists say climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

California Expands PPE Stockpile and Employee Training Requirements to Address Wildfire Smoke Events

[JD Supra reports](#) last Friday, Governor Newsom signed [Assembly Bill 73 \(AB 73\)](#) which expands worker protections from wildfire smoke.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, California enacted Health & Safety Code section 131021 last year. It requires the State Department of Public Health and Office of Emergency Services to establish a stockpile of personal protective equipment (PPE) to address pandemics and other health emergencies. In developing the guidelines for creating this stockpile, the Department must consider, among other things, the amount and type of PPE required for health care workers and other “essential workers” during a 90-day period.

AB 73 broadens the scope of this law to specify that wildfire smoke events are considered health emergencies for these purposes. In addition, the definition of an “essential worker” was expanded to include agricultural workers. The bill goes into effect immediately. As a practical result, the Department and Office of Emergency Services will need to re-evaluate the PPE stockpile to ensure it includes sufficient PPE to address wildfire smoke events and to protect agricultural workers during pandemics, wildfire smoke events, and other health emergencies.

The bill also requires the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Division) to review and update the wildfire [smoke training requirements](#) that employers must follow. Critically, the employee training needs to be provided in a language and manner that is readily understandable by employees. Updates to these training requirements will be posted on the Division’s website.

‘Shaman’ Charged with ‘Starting California Wildfire That Destroyed 41 Homes & May Be Linked to Other Blazes

[California News Times reports](#) a California woman was charged with igniting a wildfire that destroyed 41 homes and claimed that the incident happened by accident when she boiled and drank bear urine.

Former forestry student Alexandra Souverneva, 30, was charged with a felony on Friday.

Acquitted Souverneva could face up to nine years’ imprisonment if convicted after burning 8,500 acres of land and destroying 41 homes and 90 other structures.

Her bail for wildfire damage is now \$ 150,000 and previously \$ 10,000. An additional \$ 25,000 fee was added to the arson during a state of emergency for misdemeanor.

Stephanie Bredgett, a lawyer in the Shasta County District, has revealed that Souverneva is suspected of causing other fires within the county and throughout the state.

Souverneva claims to be thirsty when he found a puddle of bear urine while hiking.

She claims that she tried to filter the liquid found in the dry stream bed with a tea bag but failed. She decided to make a fire and boil water instead.

Souverneva said the area was too moist to start a fire, so she drank water and left.

As of Monday, 45% of the phone fires that burned more than 13 square miles were contained, and three firefighters were reportedly injured.

Souverneva was found acting eerie in the area where Fawn Fire ignited.

Sverneva, who describes herself as a shaman, has a criminal record of the past. She was accused of trespassing earlier this month.

"It's hard to tell if such a disaster isn't a natural disaster, but we have suspects," Shasta County Sheriff Michael L. Johnson said at a meeting on Saturday.

"Intentional ignition, if proven, makes it difficult for us all to see as a community and deal with what we are facing," he added.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire said in a statement that Sberneva was found to behave eerily in the area where the fawn fire ignited Wednesday afternoon.

Later that day, she left the woodlands and admitted to firefighters that she was dehydrated and in need of medical assistance, CalFire pointed out. Souverneva reportedly housed a lighter.

After investigating the case, authorities concluded that Souverneva was responsible for setting up a widespread flame.

She is currently arrested in Shasta County Prison. It is unknown if Souverneva has a lawyer.

The Souverneva preliminary hearing will be held on October 7.

Vaccine Racial Disparity Gap Narrows

[USA Today reports](#) the gap in racial disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates is closing, according to a new survey released Tuesday.

A [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) survey found 73% of Hispanic adults, 71% of white adults and 70% of Black adults in the U.S. had already received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The numbers were "very, very encouraging to see," Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, who is leading the White House's effort on health equity, said during a news conference.

Earlier in the nation's vaccination efforts, data showed a much wider gap among vaccination rates between different racial and ethnic groups, driven by barriers to access and misconceptions, Nunez-Smith said. The new data is "the result of intentional work to address those barriers, to address those concerns," she said.

The survey also found among those with the lowest vaccination rates were white, evangelical Christians, rural residents, Republicans and the uninsured under age 65.

Among U.S. adults who received the vaccine more recently, fear of the delta variant and associated hospitalizations and deaths was the biggest motivating factor, the survey found. Vaccine mandates and FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine played a more minor role.

400k Americans Got Booster Shots Last Weekend

[USA Today reports](#) more than 400,000 Americans got Pfizer booster shots last weekend through local pharmacies in the opening days of the U.S. effort to provide more protection for vulnerable populations.

White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients said an additional 1 million people have scheduled booster shots for the coming weeks. He added: "We're off to a very strong start with the booster campaign."

As many as 25 million people qualify for the third dose of the Pfizer shot, which was authorized last week for those 65 or older, those with pre-existing conditions or facing an elevated risk at their workplace.

U.S. officials say their primary focus is ensuring the roughly 25% of eligible Americans who have yet to get their first shot do so. Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, says a major priority is the vaccination rate among pregnant people, which stands at 30% nationally and at 15% among Black pregnant people.

Rapid COVID-19 Tests in Short Supply in California

[CalMatters reports](#) Sarah Voit likes to keep 10 to 15 rapid test kits on hand in case any of the residents of the Family Emergency Shelter Coalition in Hayward need to be tested for COVID-19. They've had some infection scares, and the antigen tests — which return results in minutes — have been crucial to curbing the virus in the family shelter.

But in recent weeks, the staff has struggled to purchase enough rapid test kits. The local Walgreens and Costco have started limiting sales to one per customer. “We ran into the same issue at the beginning of the pandemic when we were trying to buy Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer,” said Voit, the shelter’s program director.

Three weeks ago, a child living at the shelter was sent home from school after a classmate contracted COVID-19. Voit’s team used the rapid tests on the whole family. They all came back positive.

A nearby clinic offers COVID-19 tests, but only PCR tests, which usually take several days for results. Even a single day’s wait could fuel an outbreak among the shelter’s 23 adults and children.

Voit managed to find an online supplier and ordered 70 kits for the shelter, but they aren’t coming anytime soon: The delivery date is a month out.

Online and in stores, major retailers are sold out of the popular at-home tests, and medical supply vendors can’t find enough rapid test kits for schools, shelters, nursing homes, employers and other groups. Across the state, people in low-income communities are being turned away as community groups and clinics are forced to ration their tests. Workers in need of regular screening for employment struggle to find them. Some parents are spending hundreds of dollars out-of-pocket to test their school kids. And nursing homes are told they may have to wait weeks for testing kits.

“The U.S. gets a D- when it comes to testing,” said Dr. John Swartzberg, an infectious disease expert and professor emeritus at UC Berkeley. “We’re not doing enough of it and it’s too difficult for people to get tests. Those with the least resources have the greatest difficulty in finding a free test site or purchasing at-home testing.”

Experts say quick and easy testing is vital to contain the spread of COVID-19. Without widespread access to tests, people don’t know they are infected and need to quarantine, causing outbreaks that could have been prevented.

“There should be little stations where you can get rapid tests anywhere, anytime,” said Joe DeRisi, professor of biochemistry and biophysics at UC San Francisco.

It's a mismatch of supply and demand. Although the state is reporting record-high testing numbers, Californians seeking same-day results and over-the-counter test kits for sniffing kids, employer verification, or merely peace of mind say they are unavailable. The problem: Nearly all state-run testing facilities offer only laboratory-based PCR tests, and people want rapid ones instead.

When the Delta variant reared its head, the shortage of rapid tests created the "perfect storm," experts say. The surge coincided with schools reopening and employers requiring quick, routine testing. At the same time, local health departments scaled back their testing efforts, focusing on vaccinations instead. Manufacturers, seeing decreased summer demand, reportedly [shuttered production lines and tossed unsold product](#).

Fewer than 10% of testing locations across the state now offer rapid-result antigen tests, according to a database from [Coders Against COVID and URISA GISCorps](#).

California Nursing Shortage Exacerbated by Vaccine Mandates

[The Center Square reports](#) federal and state COVID-19 vaccine mandates are exacerbating a nursing shortage in California.

The recent federal mandate requires health care workers at Medicare- and Medicaid-funded hospitals to take the COVID-19 vaccines or the facilities where they work would lose federal funding. The order has resulted in nurses and medical staff nationwide saying they would instead retire or sue. Major health care unions have also said they will sue, arguing the order violates the very federal law used to issue the vaccines to begin with.

Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines are currently only available through Emergency Use Authorization, which federal law requires only be administered on a voluntary basis with informed consent.

But the federal mandate hasn't yet been implemented and will likely be held up in courts, whereas California issued its own state mandate with a Sept. 30 deadline, posing an immediate concern. California was the first state to mandate that health care workers receive the shots as a condition of employment, with limited exemptions.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an [order](#) Aug. 5 requiring health care workers in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, ambulatory surgery centers and most health care settings to receive both COVID-19 doses by Sept. 30. Workers could apply for limited exemptions but would also be subject to a range of testing and other requirements as a condition of employment.

Years before COVID-19, nursing shortages were already a problem statewide, the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development [reports](#). Based on 2018 data, it designated 58 out of 72 geographic areas in the state as Registered Nurse Shortage Areas. Among them, 17 had high shortages, 21 had medium shortages.

Now the state is facing an even greater nursing shortage, professionals throughout the state note, resulting in Gov. Gavin Newsom signing an [executive order](#) to allow out-of-state healthcare workers to work in California. The order reinstated emergency provisions allowing the CDPH to waive certain staffing licensing requirements through Dec. 31 for applicable hospitals and health facilities per California code.

But even this has hit a roadblock because of traveling nurses, who are in high demand, who won't comply with the federal or state mandates, turning down California assignments. The traveling nurse shortage is also problematic because the state last year contracted with one of the nation's largest traveling nurse providers to help already understaffed medical facilities.

In March 2020, the CDPH [contracted](#) with Aya Health, committing to pay up to \$1 billion over six months to help hospitals meet nursing and other clinical staff shortages.

"All of our hospitals are saying staffing is a big problem," Lois Richardson, attorney for the California Hospital Association, told [Cal Matters](#). "We have fewer personnel than at the beginning of the pandemic and more patients."

But with traveling nurses choosing not to work in California, association spokesperson Jan Emerson-Shea told [The Associated Press](#), "How this is going to play out, we don't know. We are concerned about how it will exacerbate an already quite serious staffing problem."

While she says the association "absolutely" supports the state's mandate, she acknowledges that some hospitals are anticipating having to fire or suspend employees, move some to other positions, and that many traveling nurses won't take assignments in California because of the state's mandate.

There's Still Time to Apply for Rent, Utility Assistance in California

[KCRA 3 reports](#) days away from the eviction moratorium for California renters ending Sept. 30, community-based organizations are asking affected residents to act fast and [apply for rental and utility assistance](#) through [Housing is Key](#). There will also be some protections for staving off eviction after this week's deadline.

Many of these organizations are working with California officials to help distribute the money to the most affected.

"Making sure you know the dates, making sure you know how much is owed – all of the information you can give us will help any agency that helps apply for services," said Leslie Giovanini, program and operations manager at Shores of Hope, a nonprofit that helps people with transitional housing and offers other services.

Eligible renters who apply for rental assistance [through the state's rent relief program](#) can stop an eviction. Here's what to do:

- If you receive a notice to 'Pay or Quit' about rent being owed between March 1, 2020, to Sept. 30, 2021, you must give your landlord a signed [declaration of COVID-19 financial distress](#) within 15 business days.
- In all cases, your landlord MUST apply for the California COVID-19 rent relief program before they can proceed with an eviction lawsuit against you.
- If you [apply to the rent relief program](#) within 15 business days of receiving the 'Pay or Quit' notice, or within 15 business days of receiving a notice from the California COVID-19 rent relief program that your landlord has started an application on your behalf, you can stop an eviction while your application is processed.

Aside from assistance through Housing is Key, La Familia Counseling Center is also still offering financial assistance, but they say not enough Latinos and Hispanics are applying.

"This money has already been assigned for this purpose: to pay rent. If we don't take advantage of this money, then it's going to be directed to other programs, probably not benefitting minorities and the Latino community" said Antonio Gudiño, education liaison with La Familia Counseling Center.

Juana Peralta Gallegos is one of about 200 Sacramento County residents who have applied to receive assistance through the [Sacramento Emergency Rental Assistance \(SERA 2\) Program](#) that La Familia Counseling Center is helping distribute. She works cleaning houses, and when the pandemic hit, she was left without a job. This led her to miss five rent payments. She says she packed and was ready to leave her house, and without a backup plan or any family in Sacramento, she says she and her two sons would have ended up homeless.

"The most affected community is the Latino community – they should be applying. Most of the time they are afraid to ask for money," said Gudiño.

There's no deadline to [apply to the SERA 2 program](#), and the application process is open to all Sacramento County residents regardless of immigration status.

ICYMI: Funding Opportunities Ending Soon

- **Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Grant Program 2021-2022;** *consumer protection; education; health & human services*
 - **Funded by:** Department of Public Health
 - **Deadline: Friday, October 1, 2021**
 - **Total estimated funding:** \$3.026 million
 - **Full grant guidelines:** [linked here](#)
- **2021 AB 617 Community Air Grants Program;** *disadvantaged communities; education; employment, labor, & training; energy; environment & water; health & human services; housing, community & economic development; law, justice, & legal services; science, technology, and research & development*
 - **Funded by:** Air Resources Board
 - **Deadline: Friday, October 1, 2021**
 - **Total estimated funding:** \$10 million
 - **Full grant guidelines:** [linked here](#)
- **Domestic Violence American Rescue Plan (RP) Program RFP;** *consumer protection; disadvantaged communities; disaster prevention & relief; health & human services; law, justice, and legal services*
 - **Funded by:** Governor's Office of Emergency Services
 - **Deadline: Monday, October 4, 2021**
 - **Total estimated funding:** \$2,162,803
 - **Full grant guidelines:** [linked here](#)

Funding Opportunities

Outdoor Equity Grants Program

[The Department of Parks and Recreation](#) funds services/program operations including activities in a community and trips to natural areas throughout California. Focuses on delivering environmental education and outdoor recreational activities, service learning, career pathways,

and leadership opportunities through activities in the community and trips to natural areas that strengthen a connection to the natural world.

Each application will address the following in the Grant Selection Criteria section on pages 14 to 23 of the Application Guide (RFP).

1. Establish a COMMUNITY HOME BASE in an underserved community.
2. Organize educational ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY and trips from the COMMUNITY HOME BASE to natural areas.

Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public agencies, and tribal governments. This funding is statewide in California.

There is no match requirement. The grant can fund the total program cost. However, if the proposed program will cost more than the requested grant amount, the balance of additional funds needed to deliver the program must be "committed funds." Please see pages 28-31 of the Application Guide for more information at www.parks.ca.gov/oep

The deadline for this funding is **Friday, October 8, 2021**. Total estimated funding available is \$57 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

2022 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

[The CA Department of Food and Agriculture's](#) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds projects that enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops. The SCBGP is designed to support all sectors of California's specialty crop industry and improve the performance of California specialty crops within local, domestic, national, and international markets.

Grant amounts range from \$100,000 to \$500,000. The maximum grant duration is two (2) years, six (6) months, and grant funds cannot be expended before November 1, 2022, or after April 30, 2025. Projects submitted to the Additional Assistance for Historically Underrepresented Organizations Program will range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and may last up to two years. CDFA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

Eligible applicants include non-profit and for-profit organizations; local, state, and federal government entities, including tribal governments; and public or private colleges and universities are eligible to apply. Individuals are not eligible to apply. There is no limit on the number of concept proposals applicants may submit; however, each concept proposal must be for a wholly unique project.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Friday, October 8, 2021**. The total estimated funding available is \$22 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

2021-22 Law Enforcement Specialized Units (LE) Program RFP

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) has created the LE Program to create or enhance specialized units to provide a coordinated response to victims of domestic violence and their children. This will be accomplished through investigation of incidents, immediate victim

advocacy, training for patrol officers/first responders, and the development of effective protocols and practices that will continue after the Grant Subaward performance cycle has ended.

To be eligible to receive funds:

- The Applicant must be a city or county law enforcement department within the State of California, as defined in California Penal Code § 830.1.
- Receive a minimum of 50% of available points to be eligible for funding; however, a minimum score does not guarantee funding.

Requires a cash or in-kind match equal to 25 percent of the total project cost. Tribes and victim service providers are exempt.

The deadline for this funding is **Friday, October 15, 2021**. Total estimated funding available is \$1.422 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).