



## **News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (2/24/2023)**

### **Winter Weather Preparedness During California Storms**

[Cal OES News reports](#) with significant winter weather continuing to impact California, the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) would like to remind Californians about steps they can take to be adequately prepared.

When winter weather impacts California, Cal OES leads the effort to ensure local governments have the resources they need to keep Californians safe.

The National Weather Service has issued a [Winter Storm Warning](#) for much of the state with parts of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties under a [Blizzard Warning](#). Please ensure you and your loved ones are prepared for multiple rounds of rain, heavy snow, freezing temperatures and gusty winds. Due to multiple wind gusts, power outages are likely to occur.

To aid local government partners, Cal OES coordinates any necessary response and provides resources to communities such as generators, comfort kits, or other necessities to ensure that residents stay safe.

To read the full list of tips that Cal OES has provided, [visit the full article](#).

### **California Prepares for Storm That Could Bring Beauty and Chaos**

[The New York Times reports](#) Southern California has a rare blizzard warning for mountain regions starting early Friday, and residents here are eagerly anticipating snow in low-lying foothills — as long as they don’t have to drive in it.

A cold air mass has moved deep into California, dropping temperatures and setting the stage for a couple of days that could be both messy and spectacular.

Where I live in Riverside County, in the shadow of the Santa Ana Mountains, we haven’t seen snowy hillsides for nearly a decade. But there’s a good chance we’ll get a glimpse of a powder-covered landscape on Friday.

“Most folks in California will literally be able to see it in the peaks,” Daniel Swain, a U.C.L.A. climate scientist, said.

While some Bay Area residents could get snow as low as 500 feet, snow levels are expected to be higher in Southern California, Swain said. Up north, the Santa Cruz Mountains, which were deluged with rain in January, [saw some snow flurries](#) on Wednesday.

For most of the state’s residents, the snow could become a visual treat in places that rarely get a dusting. It won’t snow in the downtown areas of California’s major cities. “But, that said, it will get very close,” Swain said.

The National Weather Service’s Los Angeles office on Wednesday issued a blizzard warning for mountains in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties starting Friday morning and lasting into Saturday. The forecasters in Los Angeles said it was their “first blizzard warning that we are aware of,” though [Fox Weather meteorologists](#) later [discovered one from 1989](#).

In an afternoon forecast discussion, the Weather Service said that “this could be the largest amount of 24-48 hour snowfall seen in decades (likely rivaling the 1989 storm) for our Ventura and Los Angeles County mountains.” As much as seven feet of snow could fall in high elevations.

“Snowfall of this rate and amount could lead to damage to structures and trees with an immense threat of avalanches, especially in the eastern San Gabriel Mountains by Saturday,” the Weather Service added.

Swain said, “This is not a weekend to go skiing,” and described the amount of snow in the forecast as “mind-blowing.”

Caltrans is already warning that the Grapevine/Tejon Pass on Interstate 5 in the Tehachapi Mountains could be affected by snow closures. That would shut the state’s major north-south corridor, hindering travelers and cargo trucks.

And a [flood watch is in effect](#) from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles, starting Thursday night and lasting through Saturday. Los Angeles could get [nearly four inches of rain](#) over that period, while Pasadena could get more than six inches.

The mountains near me in the Inland Empire are also under a winter storm warning and are expected to have blizzard-like conditions later this week.

“If people can avoid traveling this weekend that would be great,” said Casey Oswant, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in San Diego. Avoid mountain travel and watch out for big rain and the potential for flooding in lower-level areas, Oswant added.

For further information, [visit the full article](#).

## **How to Track, Report and Prepare for a Power Outage as Northern California Faces Storm**

[The Sacramento Bee reports](#) high winds and rain are predicted for Sacramento this week and snow could make it into the valley.

The Sierra will see the bulk of the storm Wednesday through Friday — with snow reaching the foothills — and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. advised residents to be prepared for power outages.

“Wind always has the potential to cause outages due to trees and limbs falling on lines,” said SMUD spokesperson Lindsay VanLangingham in an email to The Bee.

PG&E customers can also [check for outages online with their addresses](#).

If you're a SMUD customer, you can [track power outages in your area online by entering your address](#).

## **Nearly 1 Million Power Outages Reported in Cross-Country Winter Storms, With More Snow, Icing and Blizzard Conditions Ahead**

[CNN reports](#) brutal winter storms are expected to deliver snow, blizzard conditions or icing across strips of the US from California to the Northeast on Thursday, part of a multiday event that has already closed roads and caused numerous power outages – even as the Southeast basks in unseasonably high temperatures.

More than 60 million people were under winter weather alerts Thursday morning from the West into the northern Plains, Great Lakes region and New York and New England. That's part of storms that already have left [nearly one million](#) homes and businesses without power, mainly in Michigan – struck partly by [freezing rain and ice](#) that's damaged [utility lines and trees](#) – and other parts of the Midwest, according to tracker [PowerOutage.us](#).

Heavy snow already hit some of these areas over the past two days – including, as of early Thursday, more than 40 inches in parts of southern Wyoming; up to 32 inches in northwestern Montana; and generally 3-6 inches across Nebraska and the Dakotas.

Search and rescue operations were underway Wednesday evening in several counties across Wyoming to recover motorists that become trapped in heavy snow, the state highway patrol [said](#).

In Minnesota, swaths of which saw 3-7 inches with locally higher amounts as of early Thursday, more than 160 vehicle crashes were reported and dozens of cars spun off roads Wednesday, Minnesota State Patrol spokesperson Lt. Gordon Shank said in a series of tweets.

In Wisconsin – similarly hit by snow since Tuesday in the north and freezing rain Wednesday in the south – Gov. Tony Evers declared a statewide energy emergency Wednesday, saying it will “allow for a more swift and efficient restoration of any electric power outages throughout the state,” a news release from his office said.

Perilous travel conditions are expected to continue in many of these areas Thursday. Snowfall of up to 1 to 2 inches per hour could hit parts of the West, the northern Plains and Great Lakes on Thursday, joined by winds as high as 40 to 50 mph, according to the National Weather Service. The combination will cause “significant impacts that will include major disruptions to travel, infrastructure, livestock and recreation,” the service [said](#).

The upper Midwest and Northeast could see an additional 6 to 12 inches of snowfall, with locally higher amounts, through Thursday, the service [said](#).

And an [ice storm warning](#) stretched Thursday morning from central Iowa to the Wisconsin-Illinois line and through southern Michigan – with freezing rain threatening ice accumulations that could make morning travel “nearly impossible” in places, the service [said](#).

Out west, in an extremely rare event, California's Los Angeles and Ventura Counties will be under blizzard warnings from Friday morning through Saturday afternoon, the weather said. That will be the first blizzard warning issued by the weather service's Los Angeles office since 1989, it said.

"Nearly (the) entire population of California will be able to see snow from some vantage point later this week if they look in the right direction," according to Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "Snow remains very unlikely in California's major cities, but it'll fall quite nearby."

The National Weather Service in San Diego has issued a blizzard warning for the San Bernardino County Mountains from 4 a.m. local time Friday to 4 p.m. Saturday. It's the first blizzard warning ever issued by the San Diego office, the weather service tweeted.

In the San Bernardino Mountains, total snow accumulations of 3 to 5 feet are likely above 5,000 feet. Snow totals of 1 to 3 feet are possible between 4,000 and 5,000 feet. The snow combined with wind gusts of 50 to 60 mph will create visibilities near zero.

Meanwhile, the Southeast will continue to see unusually high temperatures Thursday – as high as 30 to 40 degrees above normal – after more than 30 daily record highs were recorded there and parts of the Appalachians and lower Midwest on Wednesday. More than 80 such records could be broken Thursday.

The dueling winter storm and southern heat wave created a stark 100-degree temperature difference between the Northern Rockies and the South [earlier this week](#).

### **With All This Rain and Snow, Can California Really Still Be in a Drought? Look Deeper**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) only weeks after a series of atmospheric rivers deluged California, the state is once again bracing for powerful winter weather that could deliver heaps of rain and snow, including fresh powder at elevations as low as 1,500 feet.

But as worsening climate extremes and water supply challenges continue to bedevil the state, officials cautioned residents Tuesday not to assume that the recent moisture signaled an end to the drought. The entire state remains under a [drought emergency declaration](#) that Gov. Gavin Newsom issued in 2021, with millions of residents still under strict watering restrictions.

"I want to be clear that these storms — and the likely rain and snow we may get over the next few weeks — did not, nor will they fully, end the drought, at least not yet," said Yana Garcia, secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. "We're in better shape than we were two months ago, but we're not out of the woods."

Indeed, the state's wet season typically runs until April, and despite the impending storm, there remains much uncertainty about what the coming months may hold. Most of February was notably dry, with only 0.85 inches of precipitation falling statewide in the wake of January's flooding.

Experts said it will take more than a series of storms to make up for years of deficits. Some said declaring the drought over now — or possibly ever — would be a mistake.

“We’re now in a situation in California where there’s never really enough water anymore to do all of the things that everyone wants, and to declare the drought over, or the emergency over, I think would send the wrong signal,” said Peter Gleick, co-founder and president emeritus of the Pacific Institute. “I think people should still be cautious and careful and efficient, and I think water agencies should be pushing for continued improvements in water use.”

Part of the challenge is that surface conditions — including reservoir levels and snowpack — aren’t the only factors in California’s water supply. Groundwater, or the state’s system of underground aquifers, remains perilously low, [particularly in the Central Valley](#) where climate change and overpumping have left it dangerously depleted.

What’s more, Southern California’s other major water source, the Colorado River, didn’t benefit as much from January’s storms and is [dipping toward record lows](#). Federal officials have [ordered California and six other states](#) to dramatically cut diversions from the river, which has long served as a water lifeline for the West.

But even surface conditions are changing under the state’s evolving climate, which is trending toward [long-term heat and dryness](#) while being punctuated by bouts of extreme precipitation. Snowpack is regularly [melting earlier than in years past](#), and the state’s water managers are increasingly tasked with preparing for drought and flood events at the same time.

“We have been working day in and day out to adjust to a changing reality,” said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. “We know that extreme weather is getting more extreme as a result of climate change. In October, we finished one of the driest three-year periods in our state’s history, and then just last month, we experienced what is probably the wettest three weeks in our history.”

Gleick said there is often a measurable “rebound effect” after state officials remove drought orders, as [former Gov. Jerry Brown did](#) in 2017 following a similar series of storms. Though some Californians may have made permanent changes, such as removing their lawns or upgrading to water-efficient appliances, many behavioral changes are more ephemeral. People may go back to watering their grass, taking long showers or wasting water, Gleick said.

He also noted that there is a difference between a hydrologic drought and a political one, with Newsom’s drought emergency declaration giving the state authority to assist local areas with water supply challenges. While some actions can and should be taken locally, “there’s still things that the state needs to be doing in terms of funding, in terms of setting targets for efficiency improvements, in terms of changing the way that we operate the reservoirs, and in terms of how we allocate water on the State Water Project,” he said.

Declaring the drought over now would be “premature hydrologically and politically,” he added.

For more information, [visit the full article](#).

## **California's COVID State of Emergency Will Expire Next Week. What's Next?**

[NBC Bay Area reports](#) California's COVID state of emergency will expire next week, three years after it was the first state in the nation to lock down in March 2020.

But some medical experts caution that this change may cause a bit of confusion.

“There are four groups of people I think. There are people with private insurance, people on Medicare, people on Medicaid and people who have no insurance,” said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, UCSF infectious disease physician.

Those that fall into the no insurance group, may fall between the cracks when it comes to getting free or low cost care, COVID testing and vaccinations.

“Depending on where you live, people in many parts in the Bay Area, California, there are safety nets. But that's very variable depending on where you live,” said Chin-Hong.

Ending the state of emergency means mass vaccination and testing clinics will no longer be operating.

Also, health insurance companies won't have to fully cover COVID vaccines, testing and therapeutics after Nov. 11.

This, while hospitals are still seeing a number of COVID patients.

“There are still sick people. I'm still taking care of people with actual real COVID disease in the hospital. Our numbers haven't really changed too much in the last few weeks. It's just that it seems a lot of people have mild disease,” said Chin-Hong. “But, some people don't.”

President Joe Biden plans to end the nation's COVID public health emergency in May.

## **California Says it Can No Longer Afford Aid for COVID Testing, Vaccinations for Migrants**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) all day and sometimes into the night, buses and vans pull up to three state-funded medical screening centers near California's southern border with Mexico. Federal immigration officers unload migrants predominantly from Brazil, Cuba, Colombia and Peru, most of whom await asylum hearings in the United States.

Once inside, coordinators say, migrants are given face masks to guard against the spread of infectious diseases, along with water and food. Medical providers test them for the coronavirus, offer them vaccines and isolate those who test positive. Asylum seekers are treated for injuries they may have suffered during their journey and checked for chronic health issues, such as diabetes or high blood pressure.

But now, as the state confronts a projected [\\$22.5-billion deficit](#), Gov. Gavin Newsom said it can no longer afford to contribute to the centers, which also receive [federal](#) and local grants. The Democratic governor in January proposed [phasing out state aid for some medical services](#) in the next few months, and eventually scaling back the migrant assistance program unless President Biden and Congress step in with more help.



California began contributing money for medical services through its migrant assistance program during the [deadliest phase](#) of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago.

The state helps support three health resource centers — two in San Diego County and one in Imperial County — that conduct COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and other health screenings, serving more than 300,000 migrants since April 2021. The migrant assistance program also provides food, lodging and travel to unite migrants with sponsors, family or friends in the U.S. while awaiting their immigration hearings, and the state has been covering the humanitarian effort with an appropriation of more than \$1 billion since 2019.

Though the White House declined to comment and no federal legislation has advanced, Newsom said he was optimistic that federal funding will come through, citing “some remarkably good conversations” with the Biden administration.

Already, one pot of federal money has been identified. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued a statement noting that local governments and nongovernmental providers will soon be able to tap into an additional \$800 million in federal funds through a shelter and services grant program. FEMA did not answer questions about how much the agency spends serving migrants.

“We’re continuing our operations and again calling on all levels of government to make sure that there is an investment,” said Kate Clark, senior director of immigration services for Jewish Family Service of San Diego, one of two main migrant shelter operators. The other is run by Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego.

While health workers and immigration advocates want the state to continue funding, Newsom appears to have bipartisan support within the state for scaling it back. He promised more details in his revised budget in May, before legislative budget negotiations begin in earnest. And, he noted, conditions have changed such that testing and vaccination services are less urgent.

San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, a Democrat, agreed that the burden should be on the federal government, though local officials are contemplating additional assistance. And state Senate Republican leader Brian Jones of San Diego, who represents part of the affected region, said that California is set to [end its pandemic state of emergency](#) on Feb. 28, months before the budget takes effect in July.

“The pandemic conditions no longer warrant this large investment from the state, especially since immigration is supposed to be a federal issue,” Jones said in a statement.

For more information and opinions, [visit the full article](#).

### **COVID in California: Infection Linked to 43% Rise in Autoimmune Disease**

[The San Francisco Chronicle reports](#) a COVID-19 infection may substantially increase the risk of acquiring an autoimmune disease, according to [the largest study of its kind](#) to date.

Researchers in Germany compared the health records of 641,704 patients with COVID-19 in the first year of the pandemic and 1.5 million people who were never infected with the virus, analyzing the results for the risk of developing any of 30 defined autoimmune conditions.

They found a 42.63% higher likelihood of acquiring an autoimmune disease — such as psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, or Crohn’s disease — for patients who had suffered from COVID-19.

The results of the study, which were published last month as a preprint in the journal medRxiv, measured newly diagnosed autoimmune diseases in the three to 15 months after a positive COVID-19 test result.

In that period, more than 15% of people who were infected by the virus developed an autoimmune disease for the first time compared with about 11% of the people who did not have COVID-19.

Among those with existing autoimmune diseases, those who were infected had a 23% higher chance of developing an additional autoimmune disease.

### **Installing Trauma Kits as Part of an Emergency Response Plan**

[Facilities Net reports](#) in a bill that affects facility managers in California but also one all managers across the country should take note of, California Assembly Bill 2260 (Rodriguez), requiring the placement of trauma kits in buildings as part of an emergency response plan, was passed on Sept. 9, 2022.

Well supported by medical professionals, such as the American College of Surgeons and the California Medical Association, AB 2260 will require at least six trauma kits/first response kits to be installed in newly constructed public and private buildings in California. The bill became effective January 1 and applies to construction of new buildings on or after January 1.

One day after the rule took effect, the country received a public reminder of the importance of having emergency rescue equipment readily available that can save lives. On January 2, the issue jumped into the national spotlight when Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin collapsed during an NFL game in Cincinnati from suffering cardiac arrest after making a tackle. Local medical officials credited the first responders for saving his life after restoring his heartbeat with an [automated external defibrillator \(AED\)](#).

While AB 2260 only applies to California facilities, managers across the country can take note of the rule to make their buildings safer for occupants.

In addition to the requirement for at least six trauma kits in each building, the new law also requires an inspection every three years, replacing expired or missing contents of the kit, and restocking after each use when facility managers have been made aware of use. Additionally, building owners and facility managers have a responsibility for notifying tenants at least once per year of the location of the trauma kits, as well as provide contact information for training on its use.



This requirement does not apply to structures that are vacant, renovated, or under construction. In addition, occupied structures that are not owned or operated by any local government entity and are constructed on or after January 1 must have an AED. If an AED is rendered necessary, a trauma kit must be placed next to an AED. AB 2260 exempts a person or entity from liability for civil damages resulting from failure, improper operation, or malfunction of equipment or materials within a properly stocked trauma kit, according to the Health and Safety Code 1799.2 of the Good Samaritan Law.

How does this bill affect tenants, businesses and facilities? This can be described based on a structure classification of a group for which resembles the maximum occupancy. The occupancy amount reflects [regulations and standards of fire safety and hazards](#) that may be involved relative to the building.

For more information, [visit the full article](#). To read the full bill text, [click here](#).

### **ICYMI: Funding Opportunities Ending Soon**

- **CDFA Community Resilience Centers Program;** *disadvantaged communities; disaster prevention & relief; employment, labor & training*
  - Funded by: CA Department of Food and Agriculture
  - Deadline: **Monday, February 27, 2023**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$38 million
  - **Full Grant Guidelines:** [linked here](#)
    - **Online Application:** [linked here](#)
- **Physical and Digital Infrastructure Security Grant (DF) Program for Health Care Facilities RFP;** *disaster prevention & relief; health & human services*
  - Funded by: Governor's Office of Emergency Services
  - Deadline: **Thursday, March 2, 2023**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$14 million
  - **Full Grant Guidelines:** [linked here](#)
- **Physical and Digital Infrastructure Security Grant (DP) Program for Health Care Practitioners RFP;** *consumer protection; disaster prevention & relief; health & human services*
  - Funded by: Governor's Office of Emergency Services
  - Deadline: **Thursday, March 2, 2023**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$5 million
  - **Full Grant Guidelines:** [linked here](#)

### **Funding Opportunities**

#### **CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant Program FY 2022-23**

[CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#) provides funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Wildfire Prevention Grants Program funds three types of activities: hazardous fuels reduction, Wildfire prevention planning, and Wildfire prevention education. Please see the corresponding FY 2022-23 Wildfire Prevention Grants Procedural Guide located on the Wildfire Prevention Grants webpage.

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To see a full list of eligible geographic area requirements, please see the corresponding FY 2022-23 Wildfire Prevention Grants Procedural Guide located on the Wildfire Prevention Grants webpage.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Wednesday, March 15, 2023**. Total estimated funding available is \$115 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

### **2023 CUSP Program – Drought Relief Technical Assistance and Direct Producer Grants**

[The CA Department of Food and Agriculture](#) has created this program to partner with technical assistance providers to support California agricultural producers with business management training, marketing and other financial tools. Partnering organizations can also provide direct producer grants for drought relief to eligible producers.

The 2023 California Underserved and Small Producers Grant Program (CUSP) is designed to facilitate support for small and medium scale California agricultural producers, or small and medium scale Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers through technical assistance with business planning and marketing strategies. The program also includes direct producer grants for drought relief for those same priority groups.

Eligible applicants include nonprofits and tribal governments. Other applicant types include Resource Conservation Districts and County Departments of Agriculture.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Thursday, March 16, 2023**. Total estimated funding available is \$22 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

### **2022-23 Listos California Statewide Grant (LS) Program RFP**

[The Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#) has created the Listos California Statewide Grant (LS) Program to support organizations throughout California that serve multiple counties and/or larger populations with key social vulnerability factors located in areas at moderate to high risk from natural hazard. Community-based organizations throughout the state, referred to as CBOs, can work independently or subgrant with local CBOs to provide disaster training and resources to vulnerable and diverse populations. This work is intended to increase their communities' disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation capabilities.

Support organizations throughout California that serve multiple counties and/or larger populations with key social vulnerability factors located in areas at moderate to high risk from natural hazard. Community-based organizations throughout the state, referred to as CBOs, can work independently or subgrant with local CBOs to provide disaster training and resources to vulnerable and diverse populations.

Eligible applicants include nonprofits and public agencies.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Monday, March 20, 2023**. Total estimated funding available is \$8 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).