



## **News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (9/8/2023)**

### **Plan Ahead for the Unexpected: Building Your Emergency Go Bag**

[Cal OES News reports](#) California is prone to natural disasters of all kinds including wildfires, earthquakes, extreme heat and more recently, significant flooding. As climate change adds to the frequency and severity of these natural disasters, it's important to take steps now to ensure you and your loved ones are ready for anything.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) wants to encourage all Californians to have a go-bag ready in case of an emergency. Having a few essential items stashed away in a bag that's easily accessible, will help reduce the stress caused by an emergency.

There are many items you can add to a go-bag but remember a few essentials to ensure you have what you need if you have to leave your home quickly. To review Cal OES' list of go-bag essentials, [click here](#).

### **Summer Leaves, Fall Approaches: Wildfire Threats Remain**

[Cal OES News reports](#) as temperatures cool down and we approach the end of summer, it's important to remain prepared for peak wildfire season in California. Some of the largest, deadliest and most destructive fires have occurred during the fall months in recent history.

The largest wildfire sparked during the fall months in California history was the Creek fire in September of 2020. Burning over 370,000 acres, the Creek fire destroyed over 850 structures. The deadliest wildfire ever recorded in the golden state also occurred in the fall months of 2018. Starting at 5:30 a.m. on November 8, 2018, the Camp fire took the lives of 85 Californians while burning over 150,000 acres and destroying over 18,000 structures.

It's important to always be prepared, no matter the weather or time of year. Follow the steps below to ensure you and your household are prepared for an emergency.

#### Emergency Preparedness Steps:

- Sign up for emergency alerts at CalAlerts.org
- Create an emergency plan for your household, including your pets.
- Pack a go-bag with essential items, such as important documents, cash and medications.

- Be aware of the evacuation routes out of your neighborhood and plan ahead.
- Check in on friends and neighbors to ensure your whole community is prepared.

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

### **What to do AFTER an Earthquake**

[Cal OES News reports](#) in honor of Emergency Preparedness Month for September, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) continues to encourage residents of the Golden State to be prepared for, during and after a disaster. Californians pride themselves on being prepared for any disaster, but knowing what to do AFTER a disaster strikes is also very important.

Threats from an earthquake come not only from shaking, but from hazards after the shaking stops. It's important to remember to be aware of your surroundings, assess the safety of loved ones and carefully assess any damages.

To review extensive safety tips following an earthquake, [visit the full article](#).

### **Put Safety First: What to Know During High Wind Events**

[Cal OES News reports](#) high winds can occur any time of year and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) wants all Californians to be aware, prepare and stay safe.

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues a high wind warning when sustained winds of 40 mph or greater or gusts of 58 mph or greater are expected. They alert the public about these events and issue red flag warnings, indicating conditions of elevated wind speeds that raise the risk of wildfires. Look for [watches, warnings and advisories for California](#).

High wind events can be caused by a variety of factors, including thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes, as well as simple changes in atmospheric pressure.

During high wind events, Cal OES coordinates responses and provides resources by repositioning assets across the state to support local county partners. These resources include generators, comfort kits, and other necessities to help keep residents safe.

Along with state and federal partners, Cal OES monitors wind speeds around the state to identify and mitigate risk factors that could start or expand wildfires. In the case of an intense wildfire, Cal OES opens shelters and distributes essential supplies to affected residents.

In California, where extreme weather events are common, wind can be a silent instigator of disasters.

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

### **Tropical Storm Hilary: Mold Prevention and Safety**

[Cal OES News reports](#) following Tropical Storm Hilary that has affected the southern region of California, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) would like to

remind everyone of the steps they can take to protect themselves and their families from post-tropical storm related hazards.

Mold can be found in places that have experienced extreme amounts of water, hiding in walls, carpets, furniture, or other places that experienced severe flooding.

Although mold is common, it is treatable and preventable by following the steps below.

Mold growth can be visible, or it may be concealed underneath or behind water-damaged surfaces like behind furniture, along and behind baseboards, or inside walls, floors, or ceilings. Mold can be hard to detect if you do not know where to look or what the signs are:

- Areas on floors, ceilings, walls, or furniture that look stained or discolored.
- An earthy or musty smell
- Water stains on walls or ceilings
- Water damage, such as warped floors, peeling or bubbling paint.

To avoid having mold in your home make sure you are getting air flow into your house after water exposure. Make sure your sprinklers are not pointing directly at your house and that you repair any and all damages to your roof.

Before starting any cleanup activities in the home after a flood, take pictures and videos of damage to the home and belongings to provide your insurance company. After taking photos, safely throw away damaged items that pose a health risk, so that the cleanup process can start.

Then, cleaning up any standing water or debris first. Use caution when removing standing water from your home. For more information on removing standing water check out: [Flooded Homes: Removing Standing Water & Mucking Out – YouTube](#)

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

#### **Category 4 Hurricane That Suddenly Appeared in Pacific Ocean Could Send Big Waves to California**

*The San Francisco Chronicle reports* a storm that strengthened with breathtaking speed into an extremely powerful hurricane in the eastern Pacific Ocean could send strong waves and possibly tropical moisture into parts of California this weekend.

Hurricane Jova, which is roughly 600 miles southwest of the southern tip of Baja California, had sustained winds of 160 mph on Wednesday evening, making it a Category 5 hurricane and “the most powerful storm on the planet today,” according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s branch at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It had been a tropical storm only 24 hours earlier.

By Thursday afternoon, Jova’s maximum sustained wind speeds dropped to 145 mph, making it a Category 4 hurricane. The storm was expected to continue to weaken in the coming days, especially as it moves across cooler water.

Meteorologists marveled at Jova's rapid intensification, which was due in part to warm ocean temperatures. Preliminary analysis from the National Weather Service showed that Jova tied Hurricane Patricia, a 2015 storm, as the fastest hurricane to intensify from Category 1 to Category 5 in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Jova could send rain showers in Monterey and San Benito Counties on Saturday, but precipitation was expected to avoid immediate Bay Area counties, according to Chronicle meteorologist Anthony Edwards. Las Vegas might also see rain from the storm, according to the weather service there.

Meteorologists emphasize, however, that rain impacts will be nothing like Hurricane Hilary, which soaked parts of Southern California last month as it moved into the state. Hurricane Jova is well out to sea.

There is a better-than-even chance that localized flooding could occur over the weekend in Southern California along south-facing, vulnerable beaches, according to the weather service's Los Angeles branch. That could include water over some beach parking lots as well as "inches of water along paths and roads in (the) Avalon & Long Beach Peninsula area."

Worst-case damage could include significant beach erosion, and a foot or more of water on the Long Beach peninsula.

In the Bay Area, such impacts will likely be minimal, Sean Miller, a local meteorologist for the National Weather Service, told the Chronicle on Wednesday. Miller added that while Category 5 hurricanes don't happen often in the Eastern Pacific, they're not unheard of. "In the tropical Eastern Pacific the water is certainly warm enough to support it. (But) it's not something that comes around every day."

Climate change is [making the rapid intensification of hurricanes more likely](#).

As of Thursday afternoon Jova was moving about 17 mph west-northwest over open ocean. Its hurricane-force winds extended up to 30 miles from the center of the storm, and tropical storm level winds extended up to 115 miles out.

### **Climate Change Boosts Risk of Explosive Wildfire Growth in California by 25%, Study Says**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) climate change has ratcheted up the risk of explosive wildfire growth in California by 25% and will continue to drive extreme fire behavior for decades to come, even if planet-warming emissions are reduced, a new study has found.

"Emissions reductions have a minimal impact on wildfire danger in the near term — the next several decades," said author Patrick T. Brown, co-director of the climate and energy team at the Breakthrough Institute, a Berkeley-based think tank. "So it's important to look at more direct on-the-ground solutions to the problem like fuel reduction."

Although previous studies have looked at the impact of climate change on broader metrics like annual area burned, as well on conditions that are conducive to wildfires, like aridity, the

research [published Wednesday in Nature](#) drills down on how rising temperatures affected individual fires, and how they might continue to do so in the future.

The researchers analyzed nearly 18,000 fires that ignited in California between 2003 and 2020. Using artificial intelligence, they had models learn the relationship between temperature and extreme fire growth, which they defined as more than 10,000 acres in a day. They then simulated how those fires would behave under pre-industrial conditions, as well as a host of potential future conditions.

They found that climate change raised the risk of extreme daily wildfire growth by an average of 25%, in the aggregate. But the exact influence varied greatly from fire to fire — and even from day to day.

For example, if a fire ignites right after a rainstorm, the risk of extreme growth often remains relatively low, regardless of warming, said Brown, who is also a visiting research professor at San Jose State University and a member of the Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center. Conversely, if conditions are very dry, the risk is generally high, also regardless of climate change, he said.

“Where if conditions were pretty dry but not super dry then the background warming kind of pushed you over a critical threshold of drying or aridity and caused a large increase in the probability of extreme daily fire growth,” he said.

Brown likened it to the question of whether gaining a few inches in height would help a person dunk a basketball.

“If you’re 5 feet tall, growing a couple inches doesn’t affect your ability to dunk, and if you’re 8 feet tall, it doesn’t affect your ability either,” he said. “You have to be right on that critical threshold for the growth to affect your ability to dunk the ball.”

Higher temperatures alone do not increase fire danger — they do so by drying out vegetation, Brown said. That’s in part because of heat’s effect on the vapor pressure deficit, which is basically a measure of how thirsty the atmosphere is, he said. Warmer air can hold more moisture, meaning that it sucks more water from soil and plants, priming landscapes to burn.

In fact, [previous studies have found](#) the vapor pressure deficit to be the leading meteorological variable that controls how much land burns in the western U.S. during a given fire season — and that climate change is boosting the deficit upward.

By looking at how warming affected past fires, Brown’s study highlights how climate change is already making our world more combustible, said Neil Lareau, professor of atmospheric science at University of Nevada-Reno, who was not involved in the research.

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

## **How Do I Find My Wildfire Evacuation Zone or Home’s Risk Level in California**

[The Sacramento Bee reports](#) several wildfires have been burning across California, prompting evacuation orders and air quality alerts in the Northern portion of the state in late August.

Reader Beth Purrison, a Sacramento resident, asked The Sacramento Bee's service journalism team, which answers reader questions: "How do I find my fire hazard zone number? I tried googling it without success."

To learn how you can find your area's fire hazard information and what you need to do in case of emergency, [visit the full article](#).

### **California Congressman Josh Harder Leads Push to Declare Harmful Air Quality from Wildfire Smoke a Public Health Emergency**

[The Sierra Sun Times reports](#) Representative Josh Harder just introduced a new bill, the *Wildfire Smoke Emergency Declaration Act of 2023*, to allow the president to declare a "smoke emergency" when wildfire smoke creates hazardous air quality conditions.

An emergency declaration would authorize federal agencies to provide emergency assistance to states and local communities such as establishing smoke shelters, assisting with relocation efforts, and installing emergency smoke monitors.

Each year, wildfire smoke contributes to billions of dollars in damages, lost revenue, and health complications across California. Senator Merkley of Oregon has introduced an identical bill in the Senate.

"Unfortunately, we're all familiar with the feeling of breathing wildfire smoke from the burning sensation in your lungs, the lightheadedness, and inability to catch your breath," said Representative Harder. "It's led to record rates of childhood asthma in our area and I refuse to let my daughter and her generation suffer from this smoke like I did growing up. So much quality of life has been lost in San Joaquin County due to toxic wildfire smoke and it's time we recognize it as the public health crisis it is."

"The presence of extreme wildfire smoke is dangerous for public health, and as climate chaos continues to intensify these events, the lack of established federal processes, support, and resources leaves states and communities on their own to piece together a response," said Senator Merkley, who leads this legislation in the Senate and has been the Senate leader in tackling the growing problem of wildfire smoke. "It is critical for the President to be able to declare a 'smoke emergency' when these conditions strike, and this bill serves as a solution to enable the President to declare such emergencies when wildfire smoke creates dangerous and damaging conditions."

The *Wildfire Smoke Emergency Declaration Act of 2023* would also authorize the Small Business Administration to provide financial relief to businesses affected by wildfire smoke to help cover lost revenue. It is estimated that workers lose an average of \$125 billion a year because of wildfire smoke.

### **Newsom Sends More CalGuard Members to Border in Effort to Halt the Flood of Fentanyl**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) with the majority of fentanyl and other narcotics in the United States entering through California's southern border, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Thursday he would be beefing up the California National Guard presence along the border immediately to try to stem the flow.

“Fentanyl is a deadly poison ripping families and communities apart,” Newsom said in a statement Thursday. “California is cracking down — and today we’re going further by deploying more CalGuard soldiers to combat this crisis and keep our communities safe.”

The number of CalGuard members stationed along the southern border will rise from 40 to roughly 60, a 50% increase, according to Maj. Gen. Matthew P. Beevers of the California Military Department.

Beevers oversees a dual federal and state military reserve force that includes 367 CalGuard service members deployed to support anti-narcotics efforts across most of the state’s 58 counties.

Officials estimate that 65% of the narcotics supply in the United States enters the country through the California border, Beevers said.

[As the fentanyl crisis has grown](#), overdose deaths have climbed in recent years, and L.A. County has become a major fentanyl distribution hub for Mexican drug cartels, which push counterfeit pills containing fentanyl, often disguised to look like prescription painkillers.

Beevers noted at a news conference Wednesday that CalGuard had had “some extraordinarily successful operations in this last year.”

The governor’s office reported that CalGuard helped law enforcement seize more than 11,763 pounds of fentanyl [so far this year](#), and 28,765 pounds of fentanyl were seized throughout California last year.

The CalGuard anti-narcotics program is supported with a budget of \$41 million, of which \$26 million is provided by the federal government and \$15 million from the California state budget.

“We recognize this as a unique challenge to California, and I think the governor’s additional \$15 million really speaks to getting after that,” Beevers said, adding that it was “unprecedented” to receive state aid for such efforts.

The CalGuard staffing increase, which begins Thursday, focuses exclusively on the five ports of entry along the southern border: Otay Mesa, San Ysidro, Tecate, Calexico East and Calexico West.

Although U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s field officers conduct the primary work at these sites, CalGuard members assist with two major tasks: secondary vehicle inspections, in which vehicles are searched for smuggled narcotics; and vehicle X-rays, which scan to detect narcotics inside vehicles.

The increased staffing will allow nearly round-the-clock operation of the X-rays, according to Beevers, which “dramatically increases” the number of vehicles analyzed by the machines.

Newsom’s latest move at the border comes after similar CalGuard staffing increases were [made in San Francisco in the spring](#) targeting drug traffickers and suppliers in the city. Beevers said CalGuard analysts had supported local law enforcement efforts and helped make a “marked improvement” in the last couple of months.

## **New COVID Vaccine, Due as Early as Next Week, Appears to Work Well Against Pirola Subvariant**

[The Los Angeles Times reports](#) one of the new COVID-19 vaccines that could come out as soon as next week appears to provide strong protection against the latest upstart subvariant, experts say — a reassuring sign as manufacturers and public health officials work to stay on top of the still-swirling coronavirus.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been [concerned](#) that the unusually high number of mutations seen with BA.2.86, nicknamed Pirola, might make the strain able to more easily infect those who had previously caught the coronavirus or received an older vaccine formulation.

Wednesday saw the arrival of updated vaccine data that doctors had eagerly awaited. And the results were promising.

This year's version of the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna “generates a strong human immune response against the highly mutated BA.2.86,” Dr. Stephen Hoge, president of the Massachusetts-based pharmaceutical company, [said](#) in a statement. “These data confirm that our updated COVID-19 vaccine will continue to be an important tool for protection as we head into the fall vaccination season.”

Clinical trial data suggest that the forthcoming formula generated a strong antibody response against circulating variants, including BA.2.86, according to the vaccine maker.

The upcoming fall vaccines were designed against the version of the coronavirus that was dominant earlier this year: XBB.1.5, [unofficially known as Kraken](#). But questions have swirled around how much protection that formulation might afford against the far-more-mutated BA.2.86.

“It’s really good news,” Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, a UC San Francisco infectious-disease expert, said of the Moderna data. “I think it should be reassuring for people.”

There were early concerns that BA.2.86 may be more immune-evasive than even previous members of the sprawling Omicron coronavirus family. But so far, the strain has yet to forge a clear path toward dominance, either locally or globally.

BA.2.86 is not yet prevalent enough to be listed on the CDC’s [variant tracker](#). To get there, a variant needs to comprise more than 1% of cases nationally over at least a two-week period.

As of last week, there had not been any cases of BA.2.86 in California, “and at this point, there is no evidence that this strain is causing more-severe illness,” according to Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer.

Nationally, the most dominant Omicron subvariant at the moment is EG.5, also known as Eris. That strain comprised an estimated 21.5% of infections nationwide from Aug. 20 to Saturday, CDC data show. It’s expected that the new autumn vaccines will work well against EG.5, experts say.



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

## **FEMA Identifies 483 Communities for Climate Resilience Funding**

[Spectrum 1 News reports](#) parts of the country that are most prone to natural disasters will receive extra financial assistance to become more resilient under a new system the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Wednesday.

FEMA has designated 483 census tracts as [Community Disaster Resilience Zones](#) that can receive more federal dollars and technical assistance to reduce the impacts of extreme weather.

“These designations will help ensure that the most at-risk communities are able to build resilience against natural hazards and extreme weather events, which are becoming increasingly intense and frequent due to climate change,” FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said in a statement.

The new designations are the result of the bipartisan Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act Congress passed in 2022 to build resilience in areas most at risk for climate disasters. FEMA has at least one designation in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. California tops the list of zones, followed by Texas and Florida. The list includes urban, suburban, rural, coastal and inland areas.

FEMA will add designations for tribal lands and territories later this fall and will add even more zones in 12-18 months when the agency’s National Risk Index of communities most vulnerable to natural hazards is updated. The Natural Risk Index considers 18 types of natural disasters, including drought, storms, flooding and earthquakes.

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

- **Accelerate CA: Inclusive Innovation Hub Program Round 2;** *employment, labor & training; housing, community and economic development; science, technology, and research & development*
  - Funded by: Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development
  - Deadline: **Friday, September 8, 2023**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$6 million
  - **Full Grant Guidelines:** [linked here](#)
- **FY 2022-23 Clean Mobility in Schools (CMIS) and the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP);** *disadvantaged communities; education; employment, labor & training; energy; environment & water; housing, community and economic development; transportation*
  - Funded by: Air Resources Board
  - Deadline: **Friday, September 8, 2023**
  - Total Estimated Funding: \$29.65 million
  - **Full Grant Guidelines:** [linked here](#)

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Statewide Flood Emergency Response Grant Program**

[The Department of Water Resources](#) designed this grant to provide funding for local flood emergency responders to improve their capacity to respond to flood emergencies.

Eligible activities include planning, mapping, training, exercises, the development of emergency management tools, communications and communications equipment, the purchase of flood fighting materials and equipment, the development or improvement of emergency response facilities, and more.

Applicants must be a California public agency with primary responsibility for flood emergency response and coordination. This applies to counties, cities, flood control districts, reclamation districts, local maintaining agencies, and some tribes in California.

Multiple agencies may apply under the same application, but must designate a lead agency that is a flood emergency first responder.

Applicants must have jurisdiction within the State of California. This jurisdiction must fall fully or partially outside of the Legal Delta. A separate program exists to fund similar projects for applicants with jurisdiction within the Legal Delta. All projects must reduce the risk of levee failure or flooding.

Projects under this grant program may be funded up to 100% using grant funds. Additional external funding may be used to complete projects but is not required. Once awarded, project funding will be provided through a reimbursement process detailed in the grant agreement to be executed after award notification.

The application period for this funding is ongoing. Total estimated funding available is \$1.4 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).

### **Regional Climate Collaboratives Program Round 2**

[The Strategic Growth Council](#) has created this program to help communities establish partnerships, funding pathways, plan and policy readiness, and a local network of TA providers to pursue funding and implement climate projects. RCC funds collaboratives of cross-sectoral and community-rooted partners, seeking to advance both place-based and region-wide climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency efforts.

The Regional Climate Collaborative (RCC) Program is a grant program that provides resources to advance climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience within under-resourced communities. The program funds cross-sector partners to form a Collaborative and conduct various capacity building activities, such as partnership development, project and plan development, data collection, education and training, and the creation of technical assistance hubs to pursue climate investments.

SGC has a total of \$8.5 million available for Round 2 awards and anticipates funding 6 Collaboratives. Round 2 has two funding tracks:

1. Small grants range between \$500,000-\$999,999
2. Large grants range between \$1,000,000-\$1,750,000

The program includes a two-step application process. Both steps are required.

1. Pre-Proposal: Applicants must submit a Pre-Proposal by September 6, 2023 at 5:00 PM PT. The purpose of the Pre-Proposal is to help applicants, TA providers, and SGC assess whether applicants are on track to submit a complete, competitive application that meets all threshold requirements and to identify sections of the application that will need increased support. While Pre-Proposals are not scored, SGC will provide feedback on Pre-Proposals to help applicants strengthen their Full Proposal. Submitting a Pre-Proposal is required to move forward to the Full Proposal phase. (This can be seen as the intent to apply).

2. Full Proposal: Applicants must submit a Full Proposal by December 6, 2023 at 5:00 PM PT. Building off the Pre-Proposal, the Full Proposal requires more detail and final versions of the budget and workplan. Applicants can modify their project between the Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal.

Application technical assistance is available. Please email [CACE@sgc.ca.gov](mailto:CACE@sgc.ca.gov) to learn more.

Projects may occur on state or federal lands, as long as the project area meets the eligibility requirements. The program has a regional and place-based component. Project Area requirements start on page 15 of the Round 2 Guidelines.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**. Total estimated funding available is \$8.5 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).

### **County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Program**

[The Department of Water Resources](#) has created this program with the intent of helping the counties to establish standing drought task forces or to develop the county drought resilience plans, per Senate Bill 552.

The DWR County Drought Resilience Planning Grant Program is offered as a sub-program of the Small Community Drought Relief (SCDR) Program, per the allocation of the Budget Act of 2021, Section 2, Item 3860-101-0001(a). Per Senate Bill (SB) 552 of 2021, counties are required to establish a drought and water shortage task force and develop a drought and water shortage emergency response and long-term mitigation plan for domestic wells and state small water systems (serving 4-14 connections) (CWC Section 10609.70).

California's 58 Counties are eligible to submit applications.

The deadline to apply for this funding is **Friday, December 29, 2023**. Total estimated funding available is \$5 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#).