

Preparing for Energy Emergencies



The California Energy Commission in its role as the state's primary energy policy and planning agency supports emergency response efforts by serving as a central source of credible and timely information on emergency impacts to the state's energy infrastructure. Support activities include planning for shortages and major crises affecting the availability of electricity, natural gas, and petroleum fuels; assisting local governments with energy resiliency planning; and encouraging reduced energy demand during emergencies.

Planning for Energy Emergencies

The Energy Commission is responsible for developing California's strategy for responding to the loss of energy supply due to a natural disaster or a significant geopolitical event, as determined in the California Energy Emergency Response Plan. The plan provides a management and operational structure that identifies the functional relationships that must exist to ensure effective identification, response, and recovery from an energy emergency.

In response to the 2000–2001 electricity crisis, the Energy Commission implemented an electricity load management emergency program that provided more than 1,000 businesses with metering and control systems that enabled them to reduce cumulative electricity loads by more than 150 megawatts within 15 minutes of receiving an emergency alert.



In addition to providing state planning for energy emergencies, the Energy Commission helps local governments develop energy resilience plans to ensure there is a reliable energy supply for essential services provided by local governments.

Supporting Emergency Response Efforts

The Energy Commission supports the state's emergency response efforts by gathering and analyzing critical information, maintaining subject specific technical expertise, and coordinating contingency planning activities with key stakeholders. In support of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) response efforts, the Energy Commission monitors the activities of the petroleum sector and provides strategic analysis. Furthermore, agency leadership advises the Governor on the nature, extent, and duration of energy emergencies and appropriate state responses. Additional information can be found on the Response to Energy Emergencies in California & Contingency Planning webpage.

In response to the 2000–2001 electricity crisis, the Energy Commission implemented an electricity load management emergency program that provided more than 1,000 businesses with metering and control systems that enabled them to reduce cumulative electricity loads by more than 150 megawatts within 15 minutes of receiving an emergency alert. Strategic programs such as this ensure that service reliability is maintained during emergencies.

The Energy Commission's Petroleum Fuels Set Aside Program is also responsible for ensuring fuel supplies are available to emergency responders during a widespread or prolonged shortage. Upon activation by the Governor via executive order, the Fuels Set Aside Program authorizes the Energy Commission, in cooperation with Cal OES, to instruct petroleum storage facilities to hold and redirect fuel for use in disaster response and recovery efforts. This includes, but is not limited to, search and rescue, fire, police, medical, and other critical emergency service providers. Fuel held and redirected by this program is sold at market rates in transactions between suppliers and purchasers.



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