

# The California Energy Commission

## Preparing for Energy Emergencies

In 1988, the California Energy Commission developed California's first comprehensive Energy Shortage Contingency Plan that immediately became nationally recognized. Today, the Energy Commission continues to lead the state's energy emergency planning efforts.

Work includes updating the statewide Energy Emergency Response Plan, managing petroleum supplies for emergency responders, assisting local governments with energy resiliency, and encouraging reduced energy demand during emergency situations. Planning for emergencies allows the state to respond in an efficient, effective and timely manner.

## Responding to Energy Emergencies

The Energy Commission develops and maintains California's Energy Emergency Response Plan (Plan) that guides the state's efforts when there is an actual or potential loss of energy supply due to a natural disaster or a significant geopolitical event.

The Plan takes an "all hazards" approach that provides the flexibility to adapt to every energy emergency situation regardless of origin. It provides a management and operational structure that identifies the functional relationships that must exist to ensure effective identification, response, and recovery from an emergency.

The Plan primarily relies on a market approach to control energy supplies and distribution. Government intervention occurs only to the extent necessary to protect the interests of public health, safety, and welfare, along with critical community services and economic operations.

During the early stages of an energy emergency, the Energy Commission's primary role is fact finding, monitoring, and exchanging information rather than direct intervention in efforts to restore services.

In addition, the Energy Commission advises the Governor on the nature, extent, and duration of energy emergencies and appropriate state responses.

## Providing Fuel for Emergency Responders

The Energy Commission administers California's Petroleum Fuels Set-Aside Program. It is a formal allocation program used to ensure fuel supplies are available to emergency responders during a widespread or prolonged shortage.

This formal program is implemented at the direction of the Governor only after proclamation of a state of emergency. In addition, the Governor must officially sign and announce Emergency Order No. 6 which empowers the Energy Commission to "hold control of petroleum stocks" as needed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

This order gives the Energy Commission the legal authority to provide fuel as necessary to support a quick response in the event of a widespread or prolonged shortage. In cooperation with the California Office of Emergency Services, the Energy Commission can direct oil companies to provide the fuel needed by the emergency service providers responding to an emergency situation.

In the event of a shortage that causes extraordinary economic hardship, the Petroleum Fuels Set-Aside Program can also be used to assist critical industry fuel shortages, such as for California's agricultural industry.

## Ensuring Local Energy Reliability

The California Local Assurance Plan program is used to help local governments develop energy resiliency plans. These plans primarily focus on ensuring a reliable supply of energy for essential services provided by local governments.

The program outlines the appropriate planning process and offers technical assistance to local governments so that they can identify deficiencies and vulnerabilities in their energy supply, and explore alternative energy choices that are more reliable, safe, diverse, affordable and environmentally acceptable.

## Encouraging Reduced Energy Demand

A key strategy for responding to any energy emergency is reducing demand. The Energy Commission has the authority to recommend appropriate statewide measures to mitigate the impacts of constrained energy supplies at the local level.

For example, 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 over 150 megawatts within 15 minutes of receiving an emergency alert. Strategic programs such as this ensure that service reliability is maintained during emergencies.

Energy emergency contingency plans have and will continue to help California respond to unforeseen situations and mitigate potential harm to communities and the state's economy.

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