



GAVIN NEWSOM

GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

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Governor Newsom Deploys Incident Management Team to Aid Response to Catastrophic Earthquakes in Puerto Rico

SACRAMENTO – In the aftermath of [another large magnitude earthquake](#) this morning in Puerto Rico, Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the deployment of 31 disaster specialists to assist the island to rebuild and recover.

A [series of earthquakes](#) over the past week have severely damaged infrastructure along Puerto Rico's southwest coast and left more than 2,000 people in shelters. Nearly one million people remain without power and hundreds of thousands are without water. The deployment comes following a direct request for assistance from the Puerto Rican government to the California Governor's Office.

"California stands with the people of Puerto Rico," said Governor Newsom. "Our nation-sized state knows first-hand the devastating toll of natural disasters and we will provide aid and support as our brothers and sisters rebuild and recover."

The team of disaster specialists on this mission will consist of experts in incident and emergency management, engineering and safety assessment, planning, public information, debris management and crisis counseling. The California team will coordinate closely with Puerto Rico emergency management and public safety officials.

The team, which will deploy for 16 days, will be led by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and will include members from the California Department of Social Services, CalRecycle, Caltrans, and the Division of the State Architect within the Department of General Services.

The bulk of the 31-person Incident Management Team (IMT) will depart from Sacramento the morning of Sunday, January 12, and will be deployed to San Juan, Puerto Rico initially.

"The destruction by these earthquakes is clearly severe and widespread," said Cal OES Director Mark Ghilarducci. "Here in California, we have some of the most

talented and experienced emergency management staff in the world. We are ready to provide their valuable skill sets to our partners in Puerto Rico.”

Earlier this week, the Governor approved the deployment of four California Urban Search & Rescue team members from Sacramento City Fire and the Orange County Fire Authority. These US&R-trained professional firefighters are assisting with search and rescue operations.

California has an active recent history of assisting other governments beyond its borders during a crisis. In August 2019, Cal OES coordinated the deployment of a 10-person IMT with Cal OES and the California Department of Social Services staff to assist the State of Florida following the impacts of Hurricane Dorian. Emergency management specialists were also deployed to Florida in October 2018 for Hurricane Michael and to South Carolina in September 2018 for Hurricane Florence.

The Governor’s Office and Cal OES are continuing to coordinate with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to monitor for future requests for assistance.

Reporters interested in covering the Incident Management Team’s departure from Sacramento International Airport or receiving footage of the deployment should contact the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services at: media@caloes.ca.gov.

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