



25 QUESTIONS OF THE ESTABLISHED EMERGENCY MANAGER

A companion to Cal OES's *25 Questions for Emergency Managers*. The original disciplines your first hours of an incident; this list applies the same discipline to your program.

READ

the situation

ASSESS

the impact

TELL

the story

FIND

the doers

MIND

the person

GET

the decisions

01-05

READ THE SITUATION

Your program, not the incident

- 01 What mode is my program demanding of me right now: **Essential, Established, or Executive**?
- 02 What changed to put it there: turnover, a new mandate, a leadership shift, demand season?
- 03 How long will this phase last, and what does coming out of it look like?
- 04 What is actually on my plate right now, written down in one place?
- 05 Which of those items did I assign to myself, and would anyone notice if I hadn't?

06-09

ASSESS THE IMPACT

Whose risk is it, and where is the fire?

- 06 If I do nothing on this item, who carries the risk, and is it mine to carry?
- 07 What is the current impact on me? How close am I to my red line?
- 08 What happened the last time the program ran without me, and what did that prove?
- 09 Am I an emergency or merely urgent right now? Where, actually, is the fire?

10-13

TELL THE STORY

Data points and the risk card

- 10 What data points am I collecting that demonstrate the program's value?
- 11 Who has heard that story this quarter, and who needs to hear it next?
- 12 When leadership adds work without resources, is my **"you can have emergency management, or you can assume the risk"** card ready?
- 13 What would my program's absence have cost in our last activation?



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Cal Chiefs Emergency Management Section

14-18

FIND THE DOERS

On the org chart and off it

- 14 Who are my doers, on my org chart and off it?
- 15 What **invisible dotted line** could I build next, and whose approval does it need?
- 16 What is on my plate only because I haven't asked anyone else?
- 17 What am I still holding out of control, not necessity?
- 18 Who am I training now to be the next doer, and what am I handing them this month?

19-22

MIND THE PERSON

Behind the position

- 19 Where am I on the burnout curve, honestly, and what would I tell a peer who gave my answer?
- 20 When did I last fully step away (a vacation, a sick day, care when I needed it) without apologizing for it?
- 21 Do I still believe my value depends on being seen in the room, or have I let the program's performance speak?
- 22 Am I recognizing my own humanity the way I expect leadership to recognize it: the person, not just the position?

23-25

GET THE DECISIONS

Good enough, resourcing, and the one gap

- 23 Do my leadership and I agree on what **good enough** looks like this season?
- 24 What is the honest resourcing answer here (an intern, a contract, or staff), and where is the business case, framed as risk?
- 25 Could the program respond without me tomorrow? What is the one gap, and who is my battle buddy holding me to closing it?

THE ONE GAP

WHAT I WILL CLOSE FIRST

BATTLE BUDDY

WHO WILL HOLD ME TO IT

You are not behind. The cycle is the job.