

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Caltech Crisis Management Council (CMC) supports the campus community in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disruptions, while maintaining essential research, teaching, and operations. This summary outlines incidents, exercises, training, and planning from 2025, as well as objectives and exercises planned for 2026.

2025 INCIDENTS

- **High Wind and Eaton Fire Event – January 7**

The Eaton Fire began on January 7, 2025, and spread rapidly through Pasadena and Altadena due to extreme winds and dry conditions. The campus experienced wind damage to trees and buildings. Thousands of residents in Altadena, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, and La Canada, including 2,100 Caltech community members, were evacuated from their homes, and over 9,400 structures were destroyed, including 92 Caltech member homes. While the fire did not directly threaten campus, Caltech's Emergency Operations Center was activated for 20 days to address hazardous air quality concerns, distribute masks, procure and distribute air purifiers for all undergraduate and graduate housing units, distribute bottled water for off-campus residents with water restrictions, and assist with emergency housing for those under a mandatory evacuation order. Campus safety, communication, and collaboration with local and federal agencies were priorities throughout the event until the fire was contained at the end of January. Ongoing support, including access to FEMA representatives, continued through the end of the year.

EXERCISES, TRAININGS, AND EVENTS

- **Emergency Responders Forum – May 29**

Caltech's annual Emergency Responders' Forum brought together campus members with designated emergency roles for a morning of appreciation and education. This year's Forum focused on reviewing the campus response to the LA County Wildfires. Members of Caltech's Emergency Operations Center shared insights on response efforts. Attendees participated in small-group discussions on incident coordination and communication. The event provided valuable feedback from campus emergency responders and helped strengthen preparedness for future incidents. An appreciation lunch concluded the event.

- **Campus Building Evacuations – June and October**

Environmental Health and Safety coordinated the evacuation of campus building occupants during scheduled fire drills conducted in June and October. The evaluation focused on evacuation duration, assembly in the designated emergency area, and the effectiveness of floor warden procedures.

- **First Responder Awareness (FRA) Training – June and July**

All Caltech Security personnel received First Responder Awareness certification from the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI). This training covers hazardous material recognition, use of the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG), and safe notification of authorities during incidents.

- **Access and Functional Needs Exercise – August 5**

In partnership with Caltech's Accessibility Services for Students (CASS), a tabletop exercise was held to discuss support for undergraduate students with disabilities during emergencies. Participants included representatives from CASS, Student Affairs/Residential Life, and Security. The exercise led to the proposal of a Student Safety Month in 2026, featuring a tabling event to provide information and resources that will enhance campus preparedness.

- **ShakeOut Campus-wide Earthquake Drill and Personal Preparedness Fair – October 16**

At 10:16 am, Emergency Management sent an Everbridge message encouraging everyone on campus to take part in the statewide annual earthquake drill and visit Caltech's Personal Preparedness Fair, held on the second floor of the Hameetman Center from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. This year's fair included an interactive earthquake experience and a vendor and resource fair. Organizations such as the Pasadena Humane Society, Pasadena Senior Center, Caltech Staff and Faculty Consultation Center, Caltech's Accessibility Services for Students, Caltech's Disability and Leave Unit, and Caltech Security and Emergency Management took part. Attendees could also enjoy small giveaways and enter a raffle for preparedness items.

- **Emergency Operations Center Earthquake Exercise – December 4**

Caltech's annual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) earthquake exercise took place on December 4, 2025. Participants included a Full EOC activation, six Divisions Control Centers, Student Affairs, Facilities personnel, Student and Faculty Housing assessment teams, Hazmat (EHS), and the Security Command Post. Objectives of the exercise were to practice EOC and team activation procedures, test communication capabilities within the EOC, practice communications protocols between: Divisions and the EOC, EOC response field teams; and the Institute and practice Field Assessments for Facilities, Student Affairs/Housing, Faculty Housing, EHS, and Security.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLANNING AND TRAINING

- A Workplace Violence Prevention Plan and Violent Incident Log were developed in compliance with new California Legislation, SB 553. The plan can be viewed [online](#).
- Campus Security delivered Workplace Violence Prevention training to several Caltech departments and divisions in 2025, including a virtual session with LIGO Hanford on June 18. Each session featured scenario-based training on de-escalation, lockdown protocols, and protective actions for responding to active threats, including Run, Hide, Fight. The training also covered individual action planning, including identifying emergency exits and secure locations within personal workspaces.
- In November, nine Caltech Security employees were certified in Workplace Violence Prevention following a 3-day train-the-trainer program provided by AVADE, a nationally recognized workplace violence prevention training program. This training provided in-depth location-specific hazard identification, active assailant response procedures, de-escalation and defensive tactics techniques.
- Mandatory Workplace Violence Prevention training for all Caltech employees began in December. The online training covers Caltech's Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, recognizing violence hazards, reporting incidents and threats, and responding to violent incidents.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- **Public Safety App**

In 2025, Emergency Management and Caltech Security continued to promote its public safety app, Everbridge 360. The app receives Caltech Alerts and offers new features to streamline communication with Caltech Security, including one-touch dialing for emergency and non-emergency calls, virtual escorts, and an SOS panic button. Information about the app was shared at all orientations, preparedness trainings, and tabling events.

- **Satellite Phones**

Two additional satellite phones were acquired, bringing the total inventory for the Emergency Operations Center, Caltech Security, Public Information, and the Executive Policy Group to eight.

- **UHF Radios**

Caltech Security will upgrade the campus' UHF Radio System in early 2025. The new system will deliver more reliable campus-wide coverage, reduce dead zones, and add channels so departments can use dedicated talk groups. This will ensure clearer communication during daily operations, major events, and emergencies.

- **Emergency Communications Committee**

In 2026, an emergency communications committee will be formed to evaluate additional emergency communication technologies, including Starlink.

CAMPUS OUTREACH

- **Prepared Pasadena Event - May 24**

The Crisis Management Council hosted a community preparedness event for Pasadena's District 7. Pasadena Fire Department members led hands-on training in fire extinguisher use, first aid, and Urban Search and Rescue.

- **Student Outreach Initiatives – Ongoing**

Orientations for incoming students included information on emergency communications, fire safety, earthquake procedures, and lockdown protocols. These orientations took place at the beginning of the academic year and at the start of the summer programs and will transition to an online training module in 2026.

Training on emergency preparedness was also provided to student house leaders during Leadership Week on February 24th.

Student and Family Engagement (SFE) encouraged students to update their contact information to ensure they receive emergency notifications. The first student house to achieve full compliance received a meal of their choice.

- **External Agencies - Ongoing**

The Pasadena Police Department conducted training for their personnel in unoccupied campus properties. Providing these venues for training helped strengthen our partnership and increased their familiarity with campus and Caltech personnel.

2026 PLANNED EVENTS AND EXERCISES

- Student Safety Month – January 2026
- Building Evacuations – January 2026
- Lockdown System Alert Test – February 2026
- Campus-Wide UHF Radio System Upgrade – February 2026
- Pasadena Fire Department Tours – April 2026
- Emergency Responders' Forum – August 2026
- ShakeOut Earthquake Drill and Personal Preparedness Activities – October 2026
- Functional Earthquake Exercise - December 2026
- Campus Violence Mitigation and Response - ongoing sessions
- ALERTUS Beacon Testing – quarterly

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