

Code: Section: [Up^](#) [Add To My Favorites](#)**GOVERNMENT CODE - GOV****TITLE 2. GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA [8000 - 22980]** ( Title 2 enacted by Stats. 1943, Ch. 134. )**DIVISION 1. GENERAL [8000 - 8899.24]** ( Division 1 enacted by Stats. 1943, Ch. 134. )**CHAPTER 7. California Emergency Services Act [8550 - 8668]** ( Chapter 7 added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454. )**ARTICLE 15. Preservation of Local Government [8635 - 8644]** ( Article 15 added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454. )

**8635.** The Legislature recognizes that if this state or nation were attacked by an enemy of the United States, many areas in California might be subjected to the effects of an enemy attack and some or all of these areas could be severely damaged. During such attacks and in the reconstruction period following such attacks, law and order must be preserved and so far as possible government services must be continued or restored. This can best be done by civil government. To help to preserve law and order and to continue or restore local services, it is essential that the local units of government continue to function.

In enacting this article the Legislature finds and declares that the preservation of local government in the event of enemy attack or in the event of a state of emergency or a local emergency is a matter of statewide concern. The interdependence of political subdivisions requires that, for their mutual preservation and for the protection of all the citizens of the State of California, all political subdivisions have the power to take the minimum precautions set forth in this article. The purpose of this article is to furnish a means by which the continued functioning of political subdivisions will be assured. Should any part of this article be in conflict with or inconsistent with any other part of this chapter, the provisions of this article shall control.

Nothing in this article shall prevent a city or county existing under a charter from amending said charter to provide for the preservation and continuation of its government in the event of a state of war emergency.

(Amended by Stats. 1974, Ch. 595.)

**8636.** As used in this article, "unavailable" means that an officer is either killed, missing, or so seriously injured as to be unable to attend meetings and otherwise perform his duties. Any question as to whether a particular officer is unavailable shall be settled by the governing body of the political subdivision or any remaining available members of said body (including standby officers who are serving on such governing body).

(Added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454.)

**8637.** Each political subdivision may provide for the succession of officers who head departments having duties in the maintenance of law and order or in the furnishing of public services relating to health and safety.

(Added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454.)

**8638.** To provide for the continuance of the legislative and executive departments of the political subdivision during a state of war emergency or a state of emergency or a local emergency the governing body thereof shall have the power to appoint the following standby officers:

- (a) Three for each member of the governing body.
- (b) Three for the chief executive, if he is not a member of the governing body.

In case a standby office becomes vacant because of removal, death, resignation, or other cause, the governing body shall have the power to appoint another person to fill said office.

Standby officers shall be designated Nos. 1, 2, and 3 as the case may be.

(Amended by Stats. 1974, Ch. 595.)

**8639.** The qualifications of each standby officer should be carefully investigated, and the governing body may request the Director of Emergency Services to aid in the investigation of any prospective appointee. No examination or investigation shall be made without the consent of the prospective appointee.

Consideration shall be given to places of residence and work, so that for each office for which standby officers are appointed there shall be the greatest probability of survivorship. Standby officers may be residents or officers of a political subdivision other than that to which they are appointed as standby officers.

*(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 352, Sec. 176. (AB 1317) Effective September 26, 2013. Operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 543 of Ch. 352.)*

**8640.** Each standby officer shall take the oath of office required for the officer occupying the office for which he stands by. Persons appointed as standby officers shall serve in their posts as standby officers at the pleasure of the governing body appointing them and may be removed and replaced at any time with or without cause.

*(Added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454.)*

**8641.** Each standby officer shall have the following duties:

(a) To inform himself or herself of the duties of the office for which the officer stands by. Officers and employees of the political subdivision shall assist the standby officer and each political subdivision shall provide each standby officer with a copy of this article.

(b) To keep informed of the business and affairs of the political subdivision to the extent necessary to enable the standby officer to fill his or her post competently. For this purpose the political subdivision may arrange information meetings and require attendance.

(c) To immediately report himself or herself ready for duty in the event of a state of war emergency or in the event of a state of emergency or a local emergency at the place and in the method previously designated by the political subdivision.

(d) To fill the post for which he or she has been appointed when the regular officer is unavailable during a state of war emergency, a state of emergency or a local emergency. Standby officers Nos. 2 and 3 shall substitute in succession for standby officer No. 1 in the same way that standby officer No. 1 is substituted in place of the regular officer. The standby officer shall serve until the regular officer becomes available or until the election or appointment of a new regular officer.

*(Amended by Stats. 1992, Ch. 1020, Sec. 1.7. Effective January 1, 1993.)*

**8642.** Whenever a state of war emergency a state of emergency or a local emergency exists the governing body of the political subdivision shall meet as soon as possible. The place of meeting need not be within the political subdivision. The meeting may be called by the chief executive of the political subdivision or by a majority of the members of the governing body. Should there be only one member of the governing body, he may call and hold said meeting and perform acts necessary to reconstitute the governing body.

*(Amended by Stats. 1974, Ch. 595.)*

**8643.** During a state of war emergency a state of emergency or a local emergency the governing body shall:

(a) Ascertain the damage to the political subdivision and its personnel and property. For this purpose it shall have the power to issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of records.

(b) Proceed to reconstitute itself by filling vacancies until there are sufficient officers to form the largest quorum required by the law applicable to that political subdivision. Should only one member of the governing body or only one standby officer be available, that one shall have power to reconstitute the governing body.

(c) Proceed to reconstitute the political subdivision by appointment of qualified persons to fill vacancies.

(d) Proceed to perform its functions in the preservation of law and order and in the furnishing of local services.

*(Amended by Stats. 1974, Ch. 595.)*

**8644.** Should all members of the governing body, including all standby members, be unavailable, temporary officers shall be appointed to serve until a regular member or a standby member becomes available or until the election or appointment of a new regular or standby member. Temporary officers shall be appointed as follows:

(a) By the chairman of the board of supervisors of the county in which the political subdivision is located, and if he is unavailable,

(b) By the chairman of the board of supervisors of any other county within 150 miles of the political subdivision, beginning with the nearest and most populated county and going to the farthest and least populated, and if he is unavailable,

(c) By the mayor of any city within 150 miles of the political subdivision, beginning with the nearest and most populated city and going to the farthest and least populated.

*(Added by Stats. 1970, Ch. 1454.)*