



# OFFICE OF ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY'S 2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2024

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## **Special Acknowledgement**

This plan was developed through the invaluable time and dedication of Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) staff, as well as the participation and partnership of regional organizations, community residents, and state and local governmental entities.



# Message from the Director



## California Energy Safety Community,

This document contains the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety’s (Energy Safety) 2024-2029 Strategic Plan (Plan). Energy Safety was born out of tragedy and the catastrophic wildfires of 2017 and 2018. Governor Newsom and the Legislature created the department in 2021 (first as the wildfire safety division in 2020) to reduce utility-caused wildfires by pushing California’s electrical corporations to better understand and reduce their risk. In January 2022, the department’s mandate was expanded to ensure the safety of excavation around buried utility infrastructure.

Since the creation of the department, Energy Safety has developed, implemented, and iterated on wildfire mitigation plans, safety culture assessments, and safe excavation standards. The department has invested in tools and technology for efficient, strategic decision-making, and cultivated a culture of quality and innovation, supported by a capable and high-performing team.

The next phase of Energy Safety’s evolution will concentrate on five key areas: 1) enhancing infrastructure safety and risk reduction, 2) leveraging data insights, 3) building a department for staff to deliver high performance and quality results, 4) designing our operations to match organizational scale, and 5) expanding collaboration with key partners, especially Native American Tribes, underserved communities, and those who suffer disproportionate environmental impacts.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Caroline Thomas Jacobs  
Director



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# Executive Summary

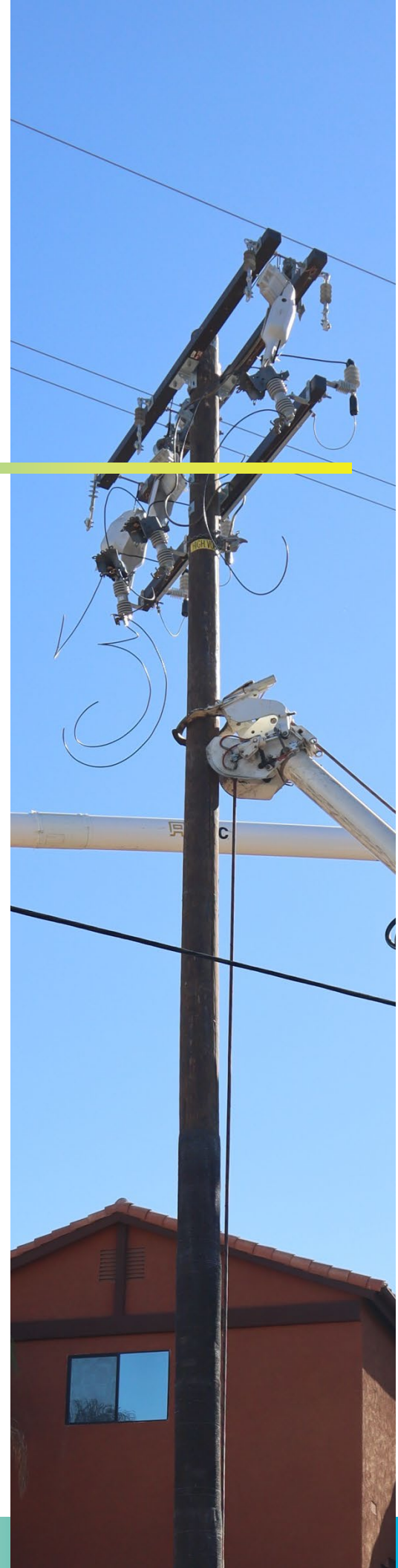
## Energy Safety's Strategic Planning Process

In July 2023, Energy Safety began development of its inaugural Strategic Plan. In July 2021, nearly two years after its creation, the department transitioned from an early start-up to a larger, established department under the California Natural Resources Agency. This transition required the department to address heavy workload demands and identify opportunities to mature the organization.

Given this need, Energy Safety staff embarked on a strategic planning process that sought input from within the organization, public sector partners, community collaborators, and members of the public. This process comprised three phases:

- **Current State Assessment**, which examined Energy Safety strengths, improvement areas, and strategic opportunities to expand its impact; and
- **Visioning**, which established the departmental direction of the next five years by creating key components of the Strategic Plan: vision, mission, core values, and guiding principles; and
- **Future State Planning**, which outlined the path to achieve the desired five-year position of Energy Safety through the development of goals, and objectives.

**This process cumulated in the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, grounded in the past and present context of the department, its future aspirations, and the steps to achieve them during the next five years.**



## The Process at a Glance

### Current State Assessment



Review of **65+ documents** detailing department functions and operations



One-on-one and small group interviews with **32 internal & external stakeholders**, totaling **18+ hours of qualitative data**

### Visioning



**Four Executive and All-Staff Visioning Sessions** to begin crafting a collective vision and mission



**Five Executive Working Sessions** to further define and refine vision, mission, values, and principles

### Future State Planning



**Three Staff Workshops** to share input and feedback on goals, objectives, timeframes, and metrics



**Four weeks** of open public and community engagement to gather external input



**Seven Executive Working Sessions** to review and incorporate feedback

## Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Energy Safety developed this Strategic Plan through a highly participatory process. Through internal and external discovery interviews, staff workshops, weeks of public and community outreach to solicit input on the Strategic Plan, and other activities, individuals representing perspectives across regional organizations, community residents, internal staff, and governmental entities have offered their insights to shape the contents of the plan. This approach enabled the department to develop strategic priorities that reflect the needs and aspirations among a wide range of Energy Safety stakeholders.

Additionally, this Strategic Plan is informed by community conversations and site visits throughout the state. Since the start of the strategic planning process, Energy Safety has traveled to more than 15 locations across northern and Southern California. The department has engaged with individuals, organizations, and sovereign Tribes, spanning rural communities, small towns, large cities, and more to learn about the varying experiences with and approaches to utility infrastructure safety statewide.

# Vision & Mission

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## Vision

Safe, sustainable utility infrastructure in California with no catastrophic excavation incidents or electrical utility-ignited wildfires

## Mission

Create a safer, sustainable California with utility infrastructure that is managed to reduce excavation and wildfire risk and is adaptable to an evolving climate







# Core Values & Guiding Principles

## Our Core Values



### Accountability

Energy Safety emphasizes transparency and responsibility in all decisions and actions affecting the department, the utilities it regulates, and the communities that are made safer.



### Innovation

Energy Safety actively pursues creative approaches and new solutions that continually strengthen its work and expand its impact.



### Leadership

Energy Safety develops agile and inclusive leaders, who embody departmental values and principles with integrity, across all levels of our organization.



### People

Energy Safety builds and reinforces a culture of respect throughout the department to support the success of its team and, consequently, the people and communities it serves.



### Safety

Energy Safety operates with a safety-conscious mindset to build and model safe environments for its teams, utility operators, excavators, and communities.



### Stewardship

Energy Safety respects the human, natural, and capital resources entrusted to its care and embraces its responsibility to preserve the capacity of these resources to foster a sustainable world.

## Our Guiding Principles



### Equity

*Equity is the success and well-being of all people through the removal of structural barriers that create differences in access and outcomes for marginalized communities.*

Equity shapes every facet of Energy Safety, from the internal workings of the department to the ongoing contribution of its work toward environmental justice.



### Sustainability

*Sustainability is the creation and maintenance of conditions crucial for the continuation of resources vital for survival and well-being.*

Sustainability guides Energy Safety to build a present and future in which all communities can thrive for generations to come.



### Data-Forward

*Data-forward is a data management strategy and culture that empowers staff to utilize data in organizational decision-making.*

Energy Safety is grounded in key data to inform the work, from start to end – the direction, progress, levers, obstacles, risk predictions, outcomes, and more.



### Empowerment

*Empowerment is the capacity-building approach of providing staff and stakeholders with the resources, knowledge, and skills needed to be successful.*

Energy Safety cultivates and sustains a values-aligned culture by giving people the tools, information, education, and guidance to do their work with integrity.



### Collaboration

*Collaboration is the work in conjunction with individuals and organizations throughout the utility infrastructure safety community that extends departmental outcomes.*

Energy Safety creates impact by having staff work alongside each other and with the department's many external stakeholders in pursuit of the same vision for a safer California.



# Goals & Objectives

## Goals & Objectives Overview

To achieve its mission and vision, Energy Safety will strengthen resources and streamline departmental systems. This Strategic Plan outlines five goals to recruit and retain a robust team, while ensuring that department operations are positioned to reinforce a culture of seamless collaboration and agile innovation:

- 1. Safety & Risk Management:** Drive utility operators and excavators to strengthen their safety culture and adopt effective safety risk mitigation practices
- 2. Data:** Expand data management capabilities for greater real-time and predictive insights that grow departmental knowledge on infrastructure safety and organizational performance to drive strong oversight and effective compliance
- 3. People:** Build an equitable, modern organization that attracts, engages, and retains employees and strengthens organizational continuity
- 4. Operational Excellence:** Scale operational capacity that accounts for department maturity while maintaining Energy Safety standards of quality
- 5. Partnerships:** Foster a coordinated network of tribal, local, state, federal, and industry partners committed to infrastructure safety



## Goal 1. Safety & Risk Management

### Goal Overview

Goal 1 sharpens the Energy Safety approach on effective safety culture cultivation and risk mitigation over the next five years. Under this goal, the priority is to identify the critical factors that drive safety, or lack thereof, and the practices that effectively promote safety outcomes. Energy Safety will operationalize this knowledge by integrating it into the work and making it accessible to utility stakeholders. This integration will unlock possibilities for proactively reducing catastrophic events earlier, faster, and better.

### Goal 1

Drive utility operators and excavators to strengthen their safety culture and adopt effective safety risk mitigation practices

#### Objective 1.1

Develop an agile, dynamic safety and risk approach to guide the department in conducting best-in-field risk management

#### Objective 1.2

Embed risk mitigation approach and practices into department resources, policies, and processes for operators and excavators

#### Objective 1.3

Facilitate knowledge-building of risk factors and mitigation approaches between operators and excavators



## Goal 2. Data

### Goal Overview

Goal 2 will increase Energy Safety's data management capabilities to better understand the past, present, and future. To achieve this goal and its objectives, Energy Safety will adopt key pillars of a holistic data program: 1) Data Management Strategy, 2) Data Infrastructure, 3) Analytics Enablement, and 4) Data Governance. These pillars will enable robust and reliable data analysis, operational efficiency, cost reduction, compliance and quality that builds trust and transparency, data-driven decision-making, and next-generation capabilities. The result will be a nimble organization with best-in-class strategy, infrastructure, and innovative practices using emerging technologies.

### Goal 2

Expand data management capabilities for greater real-time and predictive insights that grow departmental knowledge on infrastructure safety and organizational performance to drive strong oversight and effective compliance

#### Objective 2.1

Establish a descriptive and diagnostic data system to monitor risk, assess performance, and investigate incidents

#### Objective 2.2

Develop a future insights data system that pinpoints key risk factors and identifies critical strategies for effective risk mitigation

#### Objective 2.3

Initiate and implement a collaborative, compliant, data governance program that enables strategic reporting and decision-making



## Goal 3. People & Culture

### Goal Overview

Goal 3 builds an organization that supports staff success. Maintaining a culture that fuels innovative thinking, agile decision-making, integrity, accountability, team collaboration, and other essential elements of producing high-quality work requires intentional cultivation, especially amid the significant changes that Energy Safety has experienced in recent years as a rapidly growing organization. In Goal 3, Energy Safety will develop in-house hiring, talent development, retention, and succession planning capabilities to hire exceptional staff and equip them to be successful. Energy Safety will also embed equity into the department culture and systems as it adjusts and introduces new organizational operations, processes, and structures. It will highlight its culture in ways that attract staff to the organization.

### Goal 3

Build an equitable, modern organization that attracts, engages, and retains employees and strengthens organizational continuity

#### Objective 3.1

Strengthen in-house hiring capabilities to meet the pressing talent attraction needs of the department

#### Objective 3.2

Establish a talent development framework that strengthens staff technical knowledge and provides continued professional growth opportunities

#### Objective 3.3

Operationalize a talent retention and succession planning strategy to sustain institutional knowledge

#### Objective 3.4

Design a phased effort to embed equity into Energy Safety culture and systems

#### Objective 3.5

Maintain and showcase the innovative, collaborative culture that reinforces the attraction and retention of an effective team



## Goal 4. Operational Excellence

### Goal Overview

Goal 4 adapts and streamlines operational systems to meet present and future organizational demands. In this goal, Energy Safety will address this priority by reviewing systems and processes to align with organizational workflows. Energy Safety will update processes and invest in technology to address unmet needs. Additionally, the department will strengthen internal communications and enhance its record-keeping system so its team can access the necessary information to do its work.

### Goal 4

Scale operational capacity that accounts for department growth while maintaining Energy Safety standards of quality

#### Objective 4.1

Optimize operational systems and processes that facilitate cross-functional communication and collaboration

#### Objective 4.2

Implement technology that streamlines workflows and meets shifting service and data needs of the department

#### Objective 4.3

Expand the internal communications strategy of the department for timely, relevant information dissemination that upholds organizational effectiveness and cohesion

#### Objective 4.4

Mature record-keeping practices into an intuitive system that maintains compliant, standardized, organized, and efficient records and documents management



## Goal 5. Partnerships

### Goal Overview

Goal 5 connects Energy Safety to broad climate resiliency and environmental sustainability efforts spanning wildfire mitigation, utility management, and energy management. Energy Safety will contribute to these broader efforts by collaborating with tribal, local, state, federal, academic, and industry organizations. During the next five years, the department will deepen and extend its relationships with key partners, engage those partners in the implementation of approaches that lead to safer utility infrastructure and decreased safety risk, and strengthen its external communications and organizational brand awareness to support partnership-building.

### Goal 5

Foster a coordinated network of tribal, local, state, federal, and industry partners committed to infrastructure safety

#### Objective 5.1

Cultivate tribal, local, state, federal, and industry partnerships to collaborate on infrastructure safety needs

#### Objective 5.2

Engage stakeholders to deploy effective approaches to infrastructure safety risk identification, risk mitigation, and responsiveness to infrastructure risk-induced community vulnerability

#### Objective 5.3

Grow external communications to raise brand awareness and enhance Energy Safety recognition among key partner-stakeholders





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