

"Recovery", details that it may be more complex than response

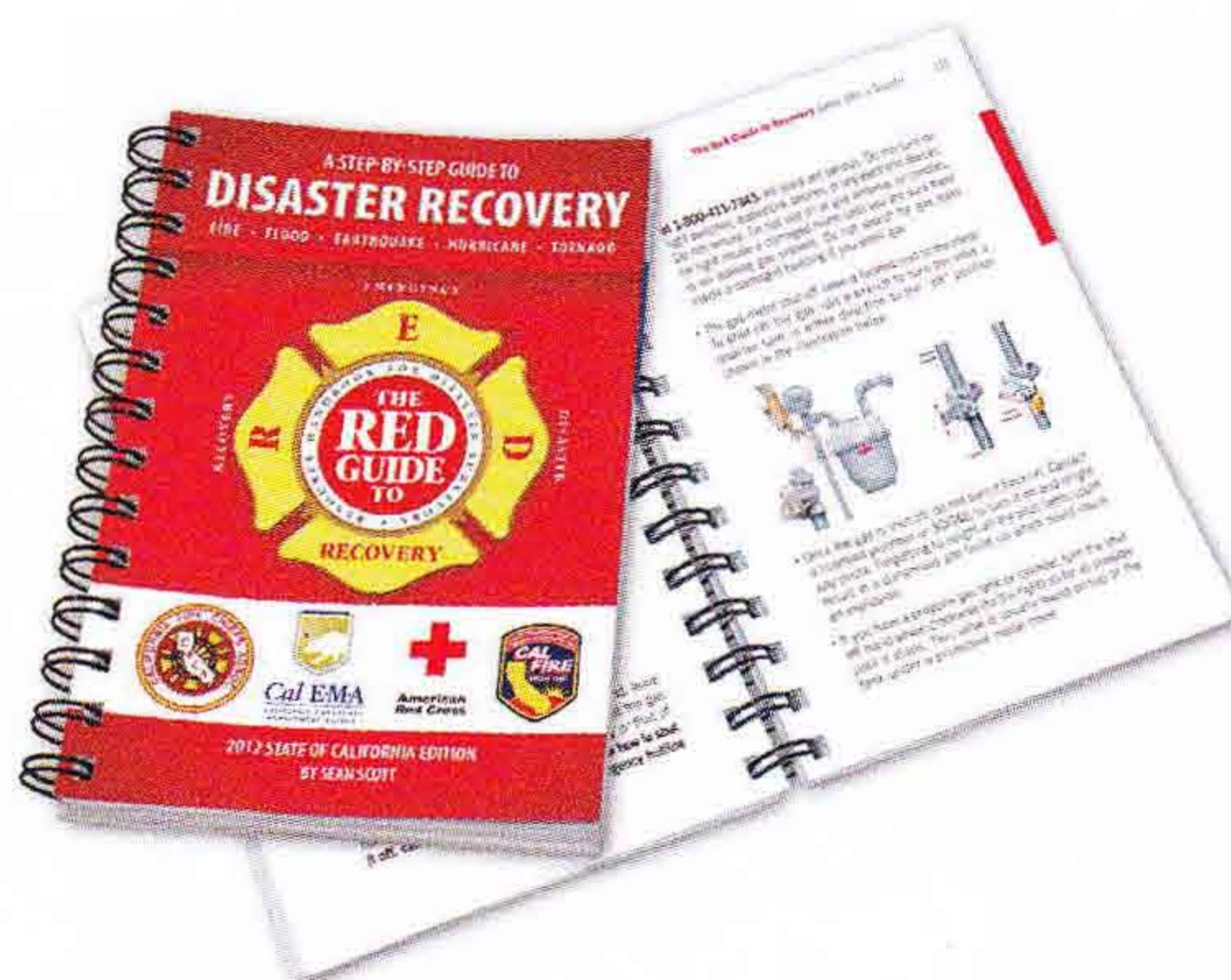
The State of California has a long history of experiencing some of the most destructive and devastating wildfires in the United States. The years of 2003 and 2007 in Northern and Southern California were perfect examples. The year of 2008 the devastation shifted to Northern California, only to be repeated in 2012 where firefighters from throughout California and around the country battled nearly 8,000 wildland fires that consumed 814,843 acres - statewide.

But what about flash flooding that impacted Inyo, Imperial, and Riverside Counties in 2012? What about the earthquakes that plagued Imperial County in 2010 and 2012? What about the severe storms already causing emergency proclamations in Northern California cities and counties in late 2012 and into 2013?

Each of those represent examples of disasters that California first responders faced, but what happens when the fire is out, or when the water salvage work is turned over to restoration contractors? Firefighters roll our fire hose and put our engines back in service and declare "Engine 1, mop up completed, scene secure, available – returning".

Far too often, the homeowners or business owners are left standing on the curb, sometimes in their night clothes - wondering where to begin. We are grateful to have the help and assistance from the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and our faith based partners in times of need - but is there something else we should, or could be doing?

In my nearly four decades of experience, I have witnessed countless times where families struggle with the first step of recovery and where to go and how to begin. In recent years, the establishments of Local Assistance Centers after conflagrations have been established to help families and businesses begin the arduous task of RECOVERY. Local assistance centers filled the needs of those who lost everything after disastrous incidents and were established after fires in San Bernardino County, San Diego, and after the San Bruno pipeline blast as well as many other incidents. However, what happens when a family loses their home to a single family residential structure fire? Or what happens to the families who lose their apart-



ments during a multi-unit fire? Or the mobile home park damaged during a flood?

As we are all far too aware of, recovery lasts much longer than response. For examples, the fires of 2003 brought about ten days of sheer terror and we witnessed the destruction of several thousand homes statewide. But recovery continues today, nine years later. And what have we learned about Hurricane Katrina and even more recently, Super Storm Sandy? We are learning that recovery will last decades and cost tens of billions of dollars.

Now there is a new tool on the market that should be carried on every fire truck and police car in America and it's called The Red Guide to Recovery - Resource Handbook for Disaster Survivors.

The Red Guide to Recovery is a comprehensive, easy-to-read post incident recovery tool that walks disaster survivors step-by-step through the recovery process, while raising awareness of the many pitfalls that often accompany disaster events. Currently supported by the California Fire Chiefs Association, the California Emergency Management Agency, the State Fire Marshal, the American Red Cross, and the California Citizen Corps, The Red Guide to Recovery provides crucial information to those who have gone through a disaster event. Filled with detailed information covering the most pertinent recovery topics, The Red Guide was created to be handed out by first responders immediately after a disaster or made available at local assistance centers to assist individuals, families, and communities expedite the recovery process. The Red Guide includes important topics that offer survivors a 10 point quick start

checklist for the first 24 hours of recovery, followed by chapters that cover:

- Emergency services to secure and protect property
- Displacement and relocation tips
- Disaster relief and financial assistance
- Homeowners' and renters insurance issues after a loss
- Personal property considerations
- Smoke and water damage information
- Estimating repair costs to structural damages
- Selecting a qualified contractor
- Public insurance adjuster services
- Hazardous material concerns
- Safety and precautions after a disaster
- Trauma intervention and grief counseling
- Avoiding disaster scams
- And much more....

Also included is a comprehensive phone directory, containing government agencies, websites, and other important contact information and a rear utility pocket that can be used to hold local phone directories, relief agency vouchers, coupons, or other supplemental resources or additional benefits.

Spending a few minutes with a resident after the response or suppression phase is completed and providing them with a copy of this book will help prevent disaster survivors from becoming disaster victims.

The books are intended to be purchased and distributed by local fire departments and law enforcement agencies via grant opportunities and/or corporate sponsorship. Based on my experience, this should become standard equipment on every piece of apparatus in America. It's that valuable for our mission of public service and our mission to restore a family back to "normal" after a devastating event.

A mobile APP for your smart phones and an EBook are available by visiting www.theredguidetorecovery.com



About the authors: Pat Dennen recently retired from the California Emergency Management Agency as the agencies Southern Region Administrator and a retired fire chief/county fire warden. Sean Scott is the author of The Red Guide to Recovery and CEO of Heritage Publishing and Communications, Ltd.