

Mark S. Ghilarducci

President and CEO

For more than four decades, Mark Ghilarducci has been a transformational leader at the forefront of crisis management, security operations, and fire protection and prevention in the State of California and around the world. Starting his career performing technical mountain rescues in California's wildlands to working tactical EMS/Fire operations at the local level, Mark established himself as an innovative, nimble leader at every level of government and the private sector.

Most recently, Mark led Emergency Services and Homeland Security for the largest, most diverse state in the nation as Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. From 2012 to 2023, Mark responded to and managed some of the most complex and challenging disasters and emergency conditions in the nation's history, including five of the most destructive wildfires in U.S. history, historic droughts, major security and cybersecurity threats, terrorist attacks, civil unrest, earthquakes, floods, energy and power emergencies, and the once-in-a century COVID-19 pandemic. He also spearheaded nation-leading efforts that improved and modernized how California responds to disasters, including a modernized 911 system, the nation's first Earthquake Early Warning System, and enhanced cybersecurity and wildfire monitoring.

In his service to the State of California, Mark drew on decades of experience in the fire service, technical rescue and security, emergency management and from time spent at the federal government and private sector. From 1988-1997 Mark served with State Emergency Services in the Office of Earthquake Programs and Regional Operations, then as the Deputy State Fire Chief, overseeing statewide special operations and mutual aid for Cal OES Fire and Rescue. From 1997 to 2000, Mark served as a Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), where he developed and implemented numerous federal-level disaster policies and regulations and responded to hundreds of Presidentially declared disasters. He has been directly engaged on countless disasters, around the world, including the Great Hanshin Earthquake in Japan, the Oklahoma City Bombing, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina. He additionally served as a senior executive and partner at two global private sector firms specializing in crisis management, hazard mitigation and capacity building, security, and government affairs.

Today, Mark continues to lend his insight and experience to numerous boards and commissions. In 2021 he became a member of the Board of Directors of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a global fire & life safety organization. In 2023, he was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to the Board of Trustees of the California State University (CSU) System, the largest public university system in the country, and since 2019, appointed by Governor Newsom, he has served as Chair of the California Catastrophe Response Council/Wildfire Fund. He has also been recognized with honors from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), the National Governors Association/Homeland Security Advisors Council, and both the California State Senate and Assembly.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of California at Davis and is a graduate of the Fellowship Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.