

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5412
dwert@sbcounty.gov

County advises residents to prepare for storms

The National Weather Service and other forecasting agencies are predicting rain, heavy at times, for the next several days from Friday through Sunday, with the heaviest rain occurring on Saturday afternoon and evening. The county is therefore warning residents in and below areas recently burned by wildfires to be aware of and prepare for the possibility of flooding. Other low-lying areas near and adjacent to watercourses may experience localized flooding.

County public safety officials and crews will be monitoring weather conditions around the clock for the duration of the storms and will be poised to alert threatened communities should the need arise. The county has several strategies and tools at its disposal, including the Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS), door-to-door and loudspeaker notifications, electronic message signs, physical and remote monitoring of flood-control channels and basins, and strategically positioned heavy equipment.

Residents are urged to be aware of their surroundings and approaching weather systems. They are also urged to review and update their emergency and evacuation plans, and if roads leading away from their property are in danger of being washed out, to identify the nearest high ground. Heavy thunderstorms can develop quickly and county crews may not have time to organize formal door-to-door evacuations.

Residents are advised to stay clear of flood control debris basins and channels. Persons can be swept away by a surge of water run off, mudflow, or debris flow. These areas are also dangerous when it is not raining as persons may become trapped in mud and debris by venturing onto what may appear to be stable soil. Do not drive where water is over the road as floodwaters can rise rapidly and sweep a car and its occupants away.

The San Bernardino County Flood Area Safety Task Force (FAST) is staying in close contact with the National Weather Service on the subject of developing storm conditions. FAST members include officials from various County departments, cities, and state and federal emergency agencies.

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The public can obtain information on storm conditions by accessing the San Diego National Weather Service (NWS) website at <http://www.weather.gov/sandiego>. Information on sandbags and other disaster preparedness measures is accessible through the county web page at www.sbcounty.gov/floodinfo by clicking on "Sandbag Information" and "Flood Control Home". Recorded information is available by calling (909) 355-8800.

A limited number of free sand and sandbags is available at county fire stations. Fire station addresses as well as information on placement of sandbags is available on the county web site.

County agencies have been conducting community meetings and distributing flyers and other disaster information. Crews have been patrolling the burn areas and affected watersheds and removing debris that could cause blockages. One key effort involved the removal of blackened trees, which could fall into waterways and create artificial dams that would eventually break loose and unleash torrents of water, mud, and debris. Protective measures including k-rail and sandbags have been placed at strategic locations.

NWS is predicting up to 10" of fresh snow in the local mountains. Visitors and residents driving into the mountains should be prepared with chains and necessary supplies for snow conditions and possible road closures.