

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5412
dwert@sbcounty.gov

County issues flood alert for recently burned areas *Heavy rains predicted today for portions of the Yucca Valley area*

The San Bernardino County Flood Area Safety Task Force (FAST) this afternoon entered into its highest state of readiness based on reports from the National Weather Service issuing a Flood Warning for the areas affected by the Sawtooth Complex and Millard fires and predicting up to a half-inch of rain per hour.

The County FAST activated the County's Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS), placing calls to land-line telephones in the areas that could be affected by flash flooding with a recorded message warning residents and businesses of the potential danger. Decision makers with various County agencies including the County Fire Department, Sheriff's Department, and Public Works are on heightened alert and are prepared to deploy County personnel and equipment as necessary.

A half-inch of rain has already fallen east of Highway 247. Public Works spotters are in Yucca Valley and the Morongo Basin working with the National Weather Service to monitor weather, and the County Fire Department has personnel in the Yucca Valley area in the event a mandatory evacuation becomes necessary.

The County is also renewing its warning to residents in and below the burn areas to be aware of and prepare for the possibility of flash floods. Heavy thunderstorms can develop quickly and County crews may not have time to organize a formal door-to-door emergency evacuation.

Residents are urged to be aware of their surroundings and approaching weather systems. They are also urged to review and update their family 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.

The County of San Bernardino has provided many innovative services to those affected by the Sawtooth Complex and Millard fires. In addition to the County firefighters and Sheriff's deputies who have responded to the emergency, the County of San Bernardino:

- The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday proclaimed a local emergency and requested emergency declarations by the state and federal governments.

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- The Board of Supervisors directed County staff to bring forth a proposal to waive waste fees and building fees for fire victims who must dispose of burned materials and then rebuild their damaged or destroyed homes.
- Established a one-day Local Assistance Center in Yucca Valley to provide fire victims direct access to a variety of services, including Transitional Assistance, Aging & Adult Services, Building & Safety, Auditor/Controller-Recorder, Assessor, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Solid Waste, State DMV, American Red Cross, United Way, and Southern California Edison.
- Created a toll-free phone line (1-800-398-9931) to provide service information to fire victims and all residents of the disaster-affected areas. The county will keep the number active seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until the current crisis is under control.
- Distributed flood warning flyers door-to-door and in public gathering places in the affected area.
- Placed fire and flood information on the County website at www.sbcounty.gov.
- Activated the County's Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS) to place calls to all land-line telephone numbers in the disaster area with recorded flood warning information.
- Public Works Department placed three electronic signboards along highways 62 and 247 to display flash flood warnings.
- Pre-positioned emergency response resources in the Yucca Valley area, including heavy rescue and front-loader equipment, small hand tools, and other items to aid in potential floods.