



# NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

*Mark A. Hartwig  
Fire Chief / Fire Warden*

**DATE:** *September 8th, 2014,*

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## **County Firefighters Rescue Victims from Flash Floods**

**Date/Time:** Monday September 8th 2014

**Location:** Highway 62 near Vidal Junction

**Incident:** Swiftwater Rescue

At approximately 8 p.m. San Bernardino County Fire received reports of numerous motorists trapped in fast moving floodwater in an approximate 20-mile stretch of Highway 62 near Vidal Junction in extreme eastern San Bernardino County. County Fire responded with units from Big River, Needles and Yucca Valley. First arriving units reported 4 subjects trapped in rising water and unable to exit the vehicle safely. County Firefighters and Swiftwater Rescue Technicians effected a rescue using a “tension diagonal” rope rescue system. A total of 5 victims were rescued and hundreds of motorists were stranded for several hours until floodwaters receded. County Fire also received assistance from the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s 40 King Helicopter, which provided aerial reconnaissance and searched for additional victims, Baker Ambulance, CRITE Fire and the California Highway Patrol. Highway 62 remained closed for several hours due to the flooding.

The summer months in the California Desert bring an increased risk of monsoonal thunderstorms. Heavy rainfall can cause normally dry washes and riverbeds to become raging torrents in a very short amount of time. It takes as little as 12 inches of moving water to move a vehicle. It is always the best practice to avoid driving through moving water.

**Turn Around Don’t Drown!**

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