



NEWS RELEASE

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Fire Chief / Fire Warden

DATE: *November 21st, 2014*
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County Fire Hosts River/Floodwater Rescue Class

Date/Time: **Friday November 21st, 2014**
Location: **Colorado River in Nevada**
Incident: **River/Floodwater rescue class**

Summary:

Recently San Bernardino County Fire hosted a River and Floodwater Rescue class at the Big Bend State Park in Nevada. This annual class meets the California State Fire Marshal curriculum and is consistent with the Urban Search and Rescue needs across the State of California. County Fire's USAR team coordinator and lead instructor for the course is Captain Donnie Vilorio. Donnie was recently assigned to Station 36 in Joshua Tree.

The focus of the class is self-rescue. Students were encouraged to increase their awareness and familiarity of moving water hazards. Topics of the three-day course included introduction to hydrology and manipulative in-water training on throw bags, shallow water crossings, specialized swiftwater rescue and safety equipment and command and control of swiftwater rescue incidents. Students also designed and built technical rope rescue systems for assisting victims that may be trapped in or around moving water.

Flash flooding is one of the few natural hazards that are present within every division of San Bernardino County. The safest way to avoid becoming trapped in flash floods is to remember the saying, "Turn around! Don't drown!" However, recognizing the widespread potential for rescue, County Fire maintains a roster of several Swiftwater Rescue Technicians, many of whom are also members of the department's Urban Search and Rescue Team. USAR resources are strategically positioned in Hesperia, Lake Arrowhead, Fontana, and Yucca Valley. County Fire currently has over 100 personnel qualified to the California State Fire Marshal's USAR Heavy Rescue Technician level.

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