



NEWS



News Headlines 12/4/2019

- Some SCE customers still without power in San Bernardino Mountains
- Practice makes perfect: County firefighters train for swift water rescues in Hesperia

Some SCE customers still without power in San Bernardino Mountains

Richard K. De Atley, The Press-Enterprise

Posted: December 3, 2019



Noah Miller of Big Bear stops on Hwy 330 at the chain control stop to put on chains as the first snowstorm of the season hits the San Bernardino Mountains on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

A few hundred customers remained without electricity Tuesday, Dec. 3, in the Crestline-Lake Arrowhead area of the San Bernardino Mountains as utility crews worked to reach customers tucked into areas where last week's snowstorm brought down power lines.

Southern California Edison said that by 5 p.m. the number of customers without power was 423, down from 1,300 earlier in the day and 1,580 Monday night.

More customers could expect power to be restored Tuesday evening, said Southern California Edison spokeswoman Mary Ann Milbourn, but others may not be back on line until Wednesday.

Some in the area have not had power since Thursday, after a powerful snowstorm rolled through and brought down trees and branches that in turn snapped power lines and damaged other equipment.

At the height of the outages 24,600 mountain customers were without power, and SCE supplied firewood distributed by the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, for residents to stay warm during freezing nighttime temperatures.

Some still-waiting customers "might be on a circuit with a lot of damage, or off the beaten path and on streets that may not be plowed yet" for crews to get access, Milbourn said.

"We have worked in snow and weather before, but I think this particular storm caught everyone by surprise, by the amount of snow," she said.

Another storm was moving into the area Tuesday night and expected to last through Wednesday, although forecast by the National Weather Service to not drop as much snow.

"We are expecting this to be mostly a rain event," Milbourn said.

The National Weather Service office in San Diego on Tuesday afternoon issued a flash flood watch for much of the Inland area west of the desert, including the San Bernardino Mountains, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday.

<https://www.pe.com/2019/12/03/about-1300-customers-still-without-power-in-san-bernardino-mountains/>

Practice makes perfect: County firefighters train for swift water rescues in Hesperia

Martin Estacio, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: December 3, 2019



Members of the San Bernardino County Fire Department's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force perform swift water training exercises on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019, in Hesperia. The annual training played out in the California Aqueduct near the Mariposa Road bridge. [Martin Estacio, Daily Press]

HESPERIA — The man struggling in the frigid water called out for help to a firefighter standing on the aqueduct's bank.

The firefighter flung out a red bag with a yellow rope attached.

"Put the rope over your right shoulder!" the firefighter yelled. The man grabbed on and fighting the current, the firefighter steadily pulled him in.

The scenario may seem like scene from a movie, but for a team of specially-trained firefighters, it could be their next call.

The practice rescue was part of annual swift water training by members of the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. The team conducted operations on an overcast Tuesday afternoon in the California Aqueduct near the Mariposa Road bridge.

County fire's USAR Task Force is one of 12 throughout the state authorized to respond to large-scale emergencies such as earthquakes, mudslides and major flooding.

The tossing of the rope bag to potentially save a victim being swept away is something every County firefighter is trained to do, Capt. Jeremy Kern said.

To perform what's called an in-contact rescue and actually go in the water, one must go through a weeklong, 40-hour course and learn a variety of techniques.

An in-contact rescue is typically only carried as a last resort because of its high risk, said Capt. Tim Goforth.

Goforth, who has been teaching swift water rescue for 14 years, said firefighters will try several options — tossing the rope bags, trying to pull the person in, or even using a helicopter — before going in themselves due to the unpredictable behavior of a rightfully frightened victim.

"They're going to be anywhere from catatonic from panic or they're going to be psychotic," Goforth said. "And they see the top of your helmet as like an island and they want to climb on that island and stay there."

To prevent this, rescuers will pull someone in at arm's length or position them so they can't fight. Firefighters on Tuesday practiced swimming out and pulling in floating colleagues to the aqueduct's shores and also paddled boats in teams.

Goforth said the swift water team rescued 15 people and five dogs earlier this spring in both the Santa Ana and Mojave rivers during a period of heavy rains.

The annual training comes as the National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for southwestern California beginning 6 a.m. on Wednesday.

According to the NWS, a fast-moving cold front will bring a period of heavy rain with mudslides and debris flows possible in the mountains and near burn areas.

County Fire officials warn people to never cross a flooded road, as only a foot of water can carry away a vehicle.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20191203/practice-makes-perfect-county-firefighters-train-for-swift-water-rescues-in-hesperia>