



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flash Floods In South Desert Lead To Numerous Rescues & One Fatality

Date/Time: Saturday, February 2, 2018
Location: Throughout Yucca Valley, CA
Incident: Multiple Swift Water Rescues

Summary: This evening, San Bernardino County Fire responded to numerous Swift Water Rescues throughout the town of Yucca Valley.

Just after 5:30pm, Medic Engine 41 located a vehicle in the wash near Barron Drive and Yucca Mesa Road. The vehicle was upside down and covered by running water. Two occupants were able to get out of the vehicle prior to the engine's arrival, however they reported that a third occupant, an elderly male, remained in the vehicle. Due to the force of the flood waters and the fact that the vehicle had been submerged for an extended period, an in-water search of the vehicle was deemed too hazardous. A search was conducted downstream by fire personnel in case the victim had freed himself.

At 6:15pm, units from the Yucca Mesa Road incident were notified of a second rescue approximately half a mile up the wash involving yet another vehicle that had attempted to cross a flooded roadway and had been pushed into the flash flood. Firefighters arrived on scene at Paradise Valley Park and located a vehicle trapped with water up to the windows. All windows were fogged up, however firefighters could see movement inside of the vehicle.

With swift water rescue resources already committed to other responses in the area, Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle assumed incident command and ordered a helicopter from San Bernardino County Sheriff to assist in the effort. The patrol helicopter, which was staffed with a swift water rescue technician, was able to access the sole occupant of the vehicle and effect the rescue. The victim was treated by County Fire paramedics and transported to a local hospital for evaluation.

At 9:30pm, San Bernardino County Sheriff requested assistance from County Fire back at the Yucca Mesa Road incident. With a decrease in water movement, the vehicle was able to be removed from the wash, and the third occupant was located inside the vehicle deceased.

With the storm moving out of the area and flood waters receding, County Fire will be working with the Town of Yucca Valley to assess the damage cause by today's floods and debris flows. We remind the public that it is never safe to cross roads covered by moving water.

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