



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Donald W. Trapp
Interim Fire Chief / Fire Warden



DATE: February 14, 2019
CONTACT: Jeremy Kern – Captain, Public Information Officer
(760) 998-1458

Firefighters Rescue 13 Subjects And 2 Dogs From Santa Ana River

Date/Time: Thursday, February 14, 2019 12:48pm
Location: E Street / Fairway Drive, San Bernardino
Incident: Swift Water Rescue #19-032219

Summary: This afternoon, San Bernardino County Fire responded to numerous Swift Water Rescues throughout the City of San Bernardino. Several calls were received for individuals stranded on islands surrounded by rising flood waters.

Just before 1pm, a swift water response was dispatched in the area of E Street and Fairway Drive, near the I-15 and I-10 freeways. Initial reports stated a single subject stranded on an island with rising flood waters. As firefighters arrived several other victims were found. A total of 9 subjects were on an island under a bridge surrounded by moderate flow flood waters and 4 subjects with two dogs were found to be in the water holding onto trees. Due to the number of victims and conditions found, additional resources were requested including heavy rescue and swift water units. These swift water units were staffed with specialists trained for water rescues during rain events.

San Bernardino County Sheriffs Air Rescue 306 was requested to assist in recon and for any potential hoist rescue. Once in the area air rescue confirmed no additional victims were in the wash area. As the E Street incident was progressing Colton and Redlands fire departments were also working swift water rescues up and down river. Coordination was established between all the incident commanders and priorities were set for the SBSD aviation assets.

Initial rescue priorities were set and a plan was developed for the four individuals in the water. As firefighters entered the water the depth and flow presented additional challenges in reaching the subjects trapped in the water. One by one the subjects and the two dogs were contacted and safely removed from the water flow where they were then evaluated by awaiting paramedics. A total of two were transported by ground to local hospitals and 2 refused treatment or care. This portion of the rescue was complete by 1:45pm.

As the rain subsided and water flow reduced, a boat ferry operation was set up to remove the remaining nine subjects stranded on the island. Once on shore they were evaluated and found to be non-injured. The Salvation Army was on scene to address any needs the individuals may have. This second portion of the E Street rescue was completed at 3:37pm.

Three engines, one heavy rescue, one swift water unit, one safety officer, one truck, one rescue helicopter, and one battalion chief, totaling 28 personnel were assigned to the incident. Loma Linda FD assisted with two engines. There were no injuries to firefighters.

We recommend the public be aware of weather related notices and recommended evacuations. River levels can rise and fall with little to no warning. Heavy rainfall can cause normally dry washes and riverbeds to become raging torrents in a very short amount of time and it only takes as little as 12 inches of moving water to move a vehicle. Never cross a road that you can't see due to it being covered by water. Remember, "Turn Around, Don't Drown."

###

Stay Connected – www.sbcfire.org
157 West Fifth St., 2nd Floor, San Bernardino, Ca. 92415-0451