



# NEWS



## News Headlines 03/14/2023

- Another storm system marching toward Southern California will bring rain, snowmelt, flooding
- 'I'm still buried.' Some SoCal mountain residents still trapped by snow as new storm hits

# Another storm system marching toward Southern California will bring rain, snowmelt, flooding

By Emily Holshouser, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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After an already exceptionally [wet winter](#), Southern California is set to see yet another heavy storm move through the region, the National Weather Service said Monday.

Starting on Tuesday, March 14, a warm atmospheric river system will arrive, bringing up to 5 inches of rainfall to some valley regions and up to 8 inches in mountain communities, which could cause flooding in areas still recovering from storms in January and February.

“This winter, we’ve gotten into this pattern where we’ve got a continuous stream of super moist storms coming into California, which has given us a lot of rain,” said National Weather Service meteorologist Stephanie Sullivan.

Rain will likely begin in the evening on Tuesday, continuing into Wednesday morning. Rain could fall at a rate of one inch per hour in some areas of Ventura and Los Angeles counties, with isolated thunderstorms also possible. A flood watch is in effect for most of Southern California through Wednesday. Snowfall is predicted above 7,000-8,000 feet in elevation, but below that, precipitation will fall mainly as rain.

Coastal Santa Barbara could receive up to 5 inches of rain. The Los Angeles Basin can generally expect about 2 1/2 inches. The San Fernando Valley is expected to receive around 2 to 3 inches of rain. Long Beach will likely see just over 2 inches. Southern Santa Barbara County and extreme western Ventura County mountains could get receive 4 to 8 inches of snow, the NWS said.

Coastal Orange County could see 2 inches while Riverside could get three quarters of an inch to 1 inch on Tuesday and another quarter to half an inch on Wednesday. The San Bernardino County Mountains may see 3 to 5 inches of rain.

The rain could mean trouble for mountain communities, where some residents are still digging their homes out of deep snow even as the main thoroughfares in and out of the mountains reopened over the weekend.

San Bernardino County officials said on Monday that they were working to prepare for the storm.

“We’re already working to inform the community to inform them about the risks,” said San Bernardino County representative David Wert. “Public Works crews are examining all of the flood control facilities to make sure they’re clear of debris and snow, and they’re watching the forecast.”

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department announced there will be additional staffing ahead of the storm.

By late Wednesday, the storm will have mostly passed, with clear skies and drier weather for a few days. The NWS, however, has noted that another storm system could form next week.

<https://www.ocregister.com/2023/03/13/another-storm-system-marching-toward-southern-california-will-bring-rain-snowmelt-flooding/>

# ‘I’m still buried.’ Some SoCal mountain residents still trapped by snow as new storm hits

By Grace Toohey, Summer Lin, LOS ANGELES TIMES  
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Firefighter Aaron Thomas waits to pick up prescription medicine for snowed-in residents at a pharmacy in Blue Jay on Friday.

Firefighters Mike Age and Aaron Thomas pulled up to the listed address for a top-priority prescription delivery Friday but couldn't initially spot the Lake Arrowhead house.

A 15-foot snow berm created from multiple plow trips blocked any view — or access — to the home's driveway, requiring some exploring down a perpendicular road to find the house along a long driveway. From that vantage point, the firefighters found a more manageable path: over a 5-foot berm, under some trees and across a side yard of snow drifts.

As Thomas sank almost waist-deep into the snow while trying to balance the insulin delivery, Age called the house “one of the harder ones” they'd attempted to reach in the last week delivering vital medications across San Bernardino County's mountain communities. Many of the residents requesting deliveries have been snowed in for more than two weeks, some unable to safely navigate the treacherous conditions or without the resources to do so after [back-to-back storms dumped](#) historic amounts of snow on the region.

“Some people have a dead [car] battery, some people have a 14-foot berm. ... There's a lot of challenges,” said Leigh Overton, emergency medical services supervisor at the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, who helped implement the new [prescription delivery program](#) — a first for the county, and possibly the state. “There's a lot of elderly folks who need us. ... We're getting to them just in time.”

ough the snow stopped falling weeks ago, life in the San Bernardino Mountains is far from back to normal. [More than a dozens residents](#) have been found dead in the wake of the series of storms that blocked roads and stranded residents, some unable to dig out from behind several feet of snow. Although all county roads have been plowed as of Monday — though many remain just a single lane — and mountain roads have reopened to the public, many local residents are angry and frustrated at the slow pace of the recovery.

The medication delivery program is an attempt to offer some aid to snowed-in residents until more of the snow can be cleared away.

When Lexi Searles opened the door to the two firefighters Friday morning, she was clearly surprised to see anyone had reached their door, given the barricade.

“How did you get here?” Searles, 34, said, laughing incredulously as she thanked the firefighters for her 73-year-old mother-in-law’s insulin. “She really needed this.

“I don’t think we realized we were going to be stuck like this,” she said. “We knew it was going to be a pretty heavy storm, but we didn’t realize it was going to be that heavy.”

“We still have residents that have a variety of needs, prescription medication, food. Some are still in the process of assessing damage to property,” said Eric Sherwin, a spokesperson for the San Bernardino County Fire Department. “There are still a number of residents whose properties are snowed in.”

He said these residents were “sheltering in place” — not by choice but due to many driveways and cars still being buried and access to resources a challenge. However, he said, his agency has seen a decline in “life-safety” concerns in recent days, as the snow slowly melts and more is cleared.

But concern on the mountain remains, especially after roads [reopened to the public this weekend](#), prompting hundreds of angry comments on the California Department of Transportation’s Facebook announcement. People who identified themselves as mountain residents called it a “terrible idea,” a “dangerous situation” and “dumb,” questioning why visitors can come in when schools are still closed and many people are still stranded.

“I’m still buried,” wrote one woman, who said she lives in Crestline’s Valley of Enchantment. “Haven’t been out of my house in 21 days, like everyone else!!”

“People are still trapped in their homes, structures are still collapsing, there is no parking, we’re down to one grocery store,” someone else wrote. “This is not the time to come play.”

San Bernardino County officials say they are prioritizing safety, responding to calls, clearing more roadways and continuing needed services, such as the prescription delivery. Although prescription requests have fallen in recent days, Sherwin said about 30 requests still needed to be filled after about 60 deliveries were made in the last week.

“As long as we have the need, we will continue to support the residents,” Sherwin said.

But many locals continue to complain about the [county’s lack of preparation](#) and response to the storms, turning to [neighbors, community groups and volunteers for help](#).

Twin Peaks resident Elsa Robles had been trapped in her home with her two children and pets since the storms late last week.

She said they were hanging in there, until she noticed her roof starting to crack and cave in under the weight of the snow. Robles contacted the volunteer group Southern California Off-Road and Recovery, and it sent out several people to shovel about 5 to 6 feet of snow off her roof.

“If they wouldn’t have come, I would be in a shelter right now with my kids and my animals,” she said.

Robles said she had to crawl out of her house, hike in the snow and hitch a ride in order to pick up some groceries and dog food.

“It’s been like two weeks and we still need help,” she said. “We got help from church and from other people — but not from the state or the county.”

She said their small, tightknit community had looked out for one another — a neighbor helped her pick up groceries by scrambling over the same berm the firefighters navigated — but it’s been stressful.

San Diego resident Adam Perruzzi spent the last week volunteering with that group since he saw photos online of people trapped in their houses and wanted to find a way to help.

“It was just amazing to see the community response,” he said. “All the places we had gone, neighbors were checking on each other. Everybody was out there shoveling. You could see different groups that got there by various different paths trying to do what they can.”

Perruzzi recalled one particularly grim incident in which an elderly man was trying to get out of his house to visit his friend in hospice and ended up getting stuck in his home.

“He tried to make his way out, but he got tangled in his staircase on the way down,” Perruzzi said. “He got stuck at 3 p.m. and they didn’t find him until 10 p.m. the next day. He had frostbite up to his thighs, but he was still alive.”

Searles, whose mother-in-law had her insulin delivered, said she decided this weekend to pay about \$1,500 to have their driveway dug out — only to find a huge crack in her vehicle windshield from the snow. But she’s focused on the positive.

“I can get to the pharmacy now,” she said.

She worries though about the ongoing weather issues, including more rain in the forecast, especially for her friends and neighbors: One friend had a tree fall on her home; others have much older homes without strong roofs.

“A lot of my friends’ homes have either been ruined or they just can’t get in,” Searles said.

The National Weather Service [warned Monday](#) that the soil in the San Bernardino County mountains was already “quite saturated” from snowmelt and rains, meaning the next storm forecast to bring more rain Tuesday could lead to “urban and small stream flooding.”

San Bernardino County firefighters were focused Monday on the foothills to ensure creeks and drainages were clear, Sherwin said.

“You start at the bottom and work your way up,” he said. “If you don’t clear out the bottom, then it backs all the way up the system.”

He said [sandbags are available](#) at locations across the county’s western mountains, though he reminded residents that they should not be placed on top of snow — only on cleared ground — otherwise they won’t work.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-03-13/san-bernardino-mountain-residents-still-digging-out-officials-neighbors-help>