NEWS

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Semi hydroplanes, crashes on 10 Fwy in Colton as rain storm drenches Southern California

Leticia Juarez and Leanne Suter, ABC 7 News
Posted: March 11, 2020, 12:32 am

A semi-truck crashed and caught fire after it hydroplaned on the eastbound 10 Freeway in Colton Tuesday morning as the first big storm of the year drenched Southern California, creating slick roads for morning commuters.

The FedEx big rig overturned on the center divider around 6:10 a.m., snarling traffic for drivers as two westbound and three eastbound lanes were shut down, according to Caltrans. An estimated reopening time was not available.

The California Highway Patrol says the driver was on the eastbound side of the freeway when he spun out, crashing and sparking a massive fire that spread to both trailers. The driver and passenger are expected to be okay.

Officials say the incident serves as a reminder to use caution while driving in the rain.

"You can hydroplane at slow speeds so just be careful out there," said CHP Sgt. Bryon Robinson.

San Bernardino County firefighters were working to extract all the singed packages to put out the flames.

The storm is expected to gain strength throughout the day, potentially impacting the afternoon commute.

Most areas saw consistent light rain in the early morning hours, but areas like Anaheim were hit with heavy downpours overnight, which was expected to be the case for most of the region after a brief lull later in the morning.

Roadway flooding, minor debris and mud flows and hazardous driving conditions are expected through Wednesday, according to The National Weather Service.

Major flooding from the storm has yet to be reported.

Water was seen pooling up along major streets in San Bernardino, though it seemed to be under control. The Inland Empire will see 1-2 inches of rain.

https://abc7.com/weather/socal-storm-semi-hydroplanes-on-10-fwy-in-colton/5999669/

Always be prepared: Organizations share information on how to prepare for disasters

Jene Estrada, Hi-Desert Star
Posted: March 11, 2020

Organizations from across the Morongo Basin shared practical emergency skills and preparedness tips during a community safety day Saturday at the Yucca Valley Community Center.

Help Yourself — Help Your Neighbor was a free community event that shared information on who to call and what to do in an emergency.

The preparedness day featured booths from the Morongo Basin Community Organizations Active in Disaster, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster, Morongo Basin Community Emergency Response Team, **San Bernardino County fire** and sheriff's departments and more. Each organization ran a booth and performed demonstrations or handed out informational fliers.

Outside in the community center courtyard, Michelle Lewis with Team Rubicon displayed techniques for demolishing drywall after a flood. Lewis said this can help families prevent mold and save money after a flood or other emergency.

Team Rubicon is a nonprofit that uses the skills and experiences of military veterans to rapidly deploy as emergency response teams. Founded in 2010, Team Rubicon has deployed across the United States and around the world to provide immediate relief to people impacted by disasters and humanitarian crises.

"We respond to fires, floods, tornadoes, storms and more," Lewis said. "I'm currently active duty aboard the combat center and most of the other volunteers are veterans so we take the skills that we learn in the military and we apply them to rebuilding houses, performing clean-up and whatever else we can do."

Dogs from the HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response team also came to the event and showed how they and their owners provide therapy during disasters. The dogs on display included Wall-e, Gunner and Star.

"Our dogs are available to assist in recovery and crisis disasters," said Gunner's human partner, Laura Finon. "They responded to the fires up in Northern California last year, they responded to the Trona earthquake, they've responded to mass shootings."

The dogs are also regulars at some of the local assisted living homes and Finon said they love their jobs and getting to help people.

Inside the community center, agencies ran booths to share about what to pack in go-bags in case of an emergency, including first aid kits, extra food and water and a means of communication.

In a disaster, communication is critical and the ham operators of the Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club came out to encourage everyone to learn to operate radios because, in an emergency situation, phone lines may be down.

"This is the thing that will work if we lose phones," said Jim Stewart. "Last year there was an issue with the 911 line and when that happened, they called us. They did that because we were still able to communicate with the station and with other agencies that could help in an emergency."

Stewart and the other hams encouraged people to include ham radios in their emergency kits and know how to use them.

Kitchen fire destroys man's house

Stacy Moore, Hi-Desert Star
Posted: March 10, 2020

Flames and smoke pour out of a Yucca Mesa home Monday morning. San Bernardino County fire dept. photo

YUCCA MESA — A grease fire flamed out of control and destroyed a man's home in the 57800 block of Starlight Mesa Road Monday.

The fire was reported at 8:10 a.m. and the **county fire** crew from the Yucca Mesa station that got there first found a single-story manufactured house fully involved in flames, Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle said.

"We went into an aggressive fire attack," Tuttle said.

With crews from Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree coming in to assist, firefighters needed 40 minutes to get the flames under control.

The spark was a grease fire that started in the kitchen, Tuttle said. The homeowner, who was the only person inside the house at the time, was able to get out safely.

However, a firefighter was hurt after the fire was knocked down.

"The floor had been damaged and as we were doing overhaul and salvage, a firefighter partially fell through the floor and injured his leg," Tuttle said.

He was taken to Hi-Desert Medical Center for evaluation and released.

The homeowner was offered shelter from the Red Cross but declined. "He has friends and family who are going to help him," Tuttle said.

The battalion chief added his advice: Don't use water on grease fires. "Cover it with a lid or baking soda works well," Tuttle said. "Having a fire extinguisher in your kitchen is the best thing."

Students get sneak peak at future careers

Kurt Schauppner, The Desert Trail
Posted: March 10, 2020

Wanda Stadum represents the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce at career day at Twentynine Palms High School Friday, March 6.

TWENTYNINE PALMS — The Transition Partnership Program in conjunction with the WorkAbility I program, hosted the 21st Annual Career Exploration Day Friday, March 6, at Twentynine Palms High School.

Career Exploration Day is attended by the entire student body of Twentynine Palms High School, students bussed in from Yucca Valley High School and invited guests.

This event offers students the opportunity to talk to a large variety of professional and para-professional people about their chosen career fields, as well as, begin a dialogue with colleges and vocational schools.

Some of the 80 plus vendors who attended included National Park Services, Army National Guard, US Marine Corps, California Highway Patrol, Morongo Basin Health Care District, Morongo Basin Ambulance, **San Bernardino County Fire** and Copper Mountain College.

Booths included student lead booths to help spread information about on campus programs. Students from the Bottle for Bowling were present, helping share information regarding their recycling program on campus.

While students from Yucca Valley High Schools Better Together Club were also in attendance. The club promotes togetherness on campus and is hoping to encourage students at Twentynine Palms High School to start their own club.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/the_desert_trail/news/article_641ee938-630c-11ea-9965-83276d8940fd.html

Officials outline COVID preparations

Judi Bowers, Big Bear Grizzly
Posted: March 11, 2020

Big Bear officials, first responders and health care providers are prepared if COVID-19 reaches the mountaintop. San Bernardino County officials are taking similar steps in preparation for the possibility of the coronavirus finding its way to the county.

At its March 9 meeting, the Big Bear Lake City Council meeting heard from City Manager Frank Rush, Big Bear Fire Chief Jeff Willis and Bear Valley Community Healthcare District CEO John Friel regarding how Big Bear is prepared for COVID-19.

At this time, there are still no reported cases of the coronavirus in San Bernardino County, including Big Bear. That message was reiterated by San Bernardino County public health officials during the March 10 Board of Supervisors meeting. The county Board of Supervisors approved an emergency item to its agenda declaring a local health emergency to allow for additional preparedness measures.

Curt Hageman, chairman of the board, said while it may seem odd to declare a health emergency when no cases have been reported in San Bernardino County, the action allows the county to go after resources in preparation. The declaration gives the executive team the ability to make decisions without delay, he said. The purpose is not to alarm anyone but focus on preparedness.

At the City Council meeting, Rush said that while there are no confirmed or reported cases in the county or Big Bear, he realizes that will likely change at some point. The threat is real and must be taken seriously, Rush said.

But to keep the coronavirus in perspective, there are 90 cases in California, a state with a population of 40 million, Rush said. There were 34 million cases of the flu reported in the United States, and 20,000 deaths due to flu. Of those 20,000 deaths, 445 were in California.

Facing the fear of the unknown is the biggest issue, Rush said.

Friel outlined the protocol the hospital uses during initial screenings that now includes asking about recent travel. If a patient is running a low grade fever of 100.4, that patient will likely be isolated and sent to a county facility for testing for COVID-19, Friel said. Bear Valley Community Hospital currently doesn't have testing kits, but Friel said he expects they will be made available from the county health department.

Friel said nasal swabs can be taken locally, which will test for other flu strains and results can be available quickly. Supplies such as masks and protective gear are on hand, but attempts to obtain additional gear have been challenging due to demand, Friel said.

With a skilled nursing facility on site at Bear Valley Community Hospital and the elderly being at higher risk, Friel said that patient population is always monitored more frequently. Visitors to the unit are screened, he said.

Willis told the City Council that the Fire Department trains for this every year. This year, there is heightened awareness that begins with dispatch asking additional questions regarding fever and respiratory issues, Willis said.

Big Bear Fire and **San Bernardino County Fire** follow the same Emerging Infectious Disease protocol in responding to cases that could be COVID-19. Based on the information obtained by dispatch, one person from the first responder team will enter the home to make an initial evaluation. Patient care evolves from the initial evaluation.

Kathleen Oplinger, deputy chief of operations for County Fire, said the first responder is also evaluated for exposure following the call and quarantined if necessary to avoid exposure to fellow firefighters and family.

Willis said if a patient is transferred to the hospital via ambulance, the rig and equipment are decontaminated immediately once patient care is transferred.

Willis said Big Bear being a recreation-based community, social distancing occurs naturally in many instances, which is a benefit.

Rush said communication with San Bernardino County officials and all local first responders is ongoing. He said it will come down to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, and state and county public health

agencies to make wise decisions if the coronavirus does reach the community. There are no cancellations of Big Bear events at this time, Rush said. He is looking at adding hand sanitizer stations in the city. It's necessary to keep the right balance between over and under reacting and keep the coronavirus in perspective, Rush said.

http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/eedition/page/page_b97aa972-13e9-5ad3-b011-40d1ea5f58b4.html

County prepares for spread of new disease

Jenna Hunt and Jene Estrada, Hi-Desert Star
Posted: March 11, 2020

Misook Choe, a Laboratory Manager with the Emerging Infectious Disease branch at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, conducts studies in order to find a solution for the Coronavirus, March 3, 2020. The Emerging Infectious Diseases branch, established in 2018, has the explicit mission to survey, anticipate and counter the mounting threat of emerging infectious diseases of key importance to U.S. forces in the homeland and abroad. Courtesy photo

JOSHUA TREE — Though no cases of the new coronavirus have been reported in San Bernardino County, the county declared a public health emergency Tuesday morning in preparation for COVID-19 spreading into the county's borders.

"You can't go anywhere without talking to your neighbor and hearing about the coronavirus and how it's affecting people across the country," 4th District Supervisor Curt Hagman said at a county board of supervisors meeting Tuesday, March 10. "The county is prepared and is doing a lot of different actions behind the scenes. If and whenever it reaches our borders, we're prepared."

New guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that older people and those with severe chronic medical conditions stay at home as much as possible.

The county's public health, emergency services and fire departments are making plans for how to respond if COVID-19 starts spreading throughout San Bernardino County.

County Director of Public Health Trudy Raymundo led a presentation at the supervisors' meeting Tuesday, updating the supervisors and the public on the county's preparedness and the COVID-19 spread.

Raymundo said the fatality rate for COVID-19 is 2.3 percent overall and 14.8 percent in patients over 80. Those numbers come from the largest study of the novel coronavirus to date, looking at 72,000 cases in China.

"We feel that rate is absolutely over-exaggerated," Raymundo said. "In South Korea, the county that has done the most testing per capita, the mortality rate is only running at about 0.6 percent. As the denominator increases, that number will continue to go down."

She stressed that it is highly unlikely, at this time, that the general public will be exposed to the virus. Those who are at high risk include health care workers and others who have been in contact with a COVID-19

patient and those who have traveled to countries where the virus is spreading: China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea.

Many of the people who traveled to these countries are being monitored, including 52 people who came into San Bernardino County from a reparation flight from Wuhan, China, that landed at the March Air Force Reserve Base.

The county tested three people who could possibly have COVID-19 on Friday, March 6, at a public health lab. All three tests came back negative.

Based on those tests, the Public Health Department believes they have the capacity to run up to 30 tests a day, but they are still waiting on additional testing kits to come in from the state and federal government.

However, if they do run out of kits, private labs Quest and LabCorp announced Monday that they are able to test patients as well.

911 operators and firefighters get new protocol

The San Bernardino County Fire Department is also training staff on ways to reduce the spread of disease as they respond to medical-aid calls for people experiencing possible COVID-19 symptoms.

San Bernardino County Fire Division Chief Kathleen Oplinger said 911 dispatch operators have a new list of questions to ask callers who have flu-like symptoms.

"Notes are put into the call and transmitted over the air," she said. "One employee will go into the residence to minimize exposure."

If that employee could have been exposed in any way to the virus, he or she will be quarantined until the original patient can be tested.

"We don't want employees to bring anything back home to their families or on a call to someone who may be of a higher risk," Oplinger said.

Although the county declared a public health emergency and Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency to help California prepare for the broader spread of COVID-19, the health risk to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time.

Morongo Basin Healthcare District Director Joseph Sullivan said it is essential to have the facts and not let people be overwhelmed with misinformation or fears.

"This is one of those things that scare people to the core," Sullivan said.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/news/article_b3578078-632f-11ea-912f-db5274be168f.html

San Bernardino County declares local health emergency, no coronavirus cases reported yet

Jesus Reyes, KESQ Channel 3 News
Posted: March 10, 2020, 2:38 pm

The San Bernardino County Public Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency on Tuesday to help continue to prepare in case coronavirus were to appear in the county.

"The purpose of this declaration is not to alarm people but to increase the focus on preparedness for both the public and county government departments and agencies," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman. "The health risk to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time."

As of Tuesday afternoon, there still are no cases in San Bernardino County, although there are several confirmed cases in neighboring Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange counties.

A county notice further reveals that since January 25, several agencies have been preparing for the possible arrival of the virus within the county. That is the same day the county was notified an aircraft carrying U.S. citizens evacuated from the region in China where the virus had originated might be arriving at Ontario International Airport. The flight was later diverted to March Air Reserve Base in Riverside County.

The County Department of Public Health activated its Department Operations Center on March 3.

County departments and agencies including Public Health, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Office of Emergency Services, **County Fire**, Sheriff, and the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency regularly meet to coordinate efforts.

County Public Health is continuing to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health to respond to reports of COVID-19.

"Although Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency to help the state prepare for broader spread of COVID-19, the health risk from COVID-19 to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time," reads the County's notice.

The World Health Organization advises people to frequently wash their hands, maintain social distancing, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and practice respiratory hygiene.

For more information on COVID-19, please call (800) 722-4794 or visit the County Public Health COVID-19 webpage at http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus/.

Health officials advise people who think they have coronavirus symptoms to contact their doctor BEFORE going to the hospital to avoid possibly spreading the illness.

Those in the Coachella Valley can call Eisenhower Health at Eisenhower Health's coronavirus hotline at 760-837-8988 or 760-TEST988 to determine next steps before going to any facility.

https://kesq.com/news/coronavirus/2020/03/10/san-bernardino-county-declares-local-health-emergency-no-coronavirus-cases-reported-yet/

San Bernardino County declares health emergency to prepare for coronavirus

Rene Ray De La Cruz, Daily Press
Posted: March 10, 2020, 8:59 pm

SAN BERNARDINO — A local health emergency has been declared by the San Bernardino County Public Health Officer and the Board of Supervisors amid concerns surrounding the new coronavirus.

County officials made the declaration to help ensure county government and the public are prepared should the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 disease, appear locally.

No cases have been reported in the county as of Tuesday, although cases have been identified in neighboring Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange counties, the county said.

"The purpose of this declaration is not to alarm people but to increase the focus on preparedness for both the public and county government departments and agencies," Board of Supervisors Chairman Curt Hagman said in a statement. "The health risk to the general public in San Bernardino County remains low at this time."

Various county departments and agencies have worked together since Jan. 25 to prepare for the possible arrival of the coronavirus. It was during that time when the county was notified of a U.S.-bound aircraft from China landing at Ontario International Airport.

The flight, which carried nearly 200 U.S. citizens, was evacuated from Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus originated. The aircraft was scheduled to land in Ontario, but it was later diverted to March Air Reserve Base, where it landed on Jan. 29.

Passengers on the aircraft were screened for signs of the illness before leaving China, after arriving in Alaska and again when they arrived at the base, the county reported.

The County Department of Public Health activated its Department Operations Center on March 3, which includes county departments and agencies meeting regularly to coordinate efforts.

Those organizations include Public Health, the Colton-based Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, the Office of Emergency Services, **County Fire**, the Sheriff's Department and the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency, which serves Inyo, Mono and San Bernardino counties.

County Public Health continues to work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health to respond to reports of COVID-19, the county said.

As with any virus, especially during the cold and flu season, county officials said there are a number steps the public can take to protect their health and those nearby:

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, as well as after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaning spray or wipes.

If someone does become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough, they should stay away from work, school or other people to avoid spreading illness and seek assistance from their healthcare provider if symptoms become severe.

N95 masks are not recommended outside a healthcare setting. Surgical masks can be worn by sick individuals to reduce the likelihood of spreading germs to others.

For more information on COVID-19, please call 800-722-4794 or visit the County Public Health COVID-19 webpage at wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/coronavirus. Information is updated as soon as it is made available.

https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20200310/san-bernardino-county-declares-health-emergency-to-prepare-for-coronavirus