



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR INCOMING WINTER STORMS

LOS ANGELES (Thursday, February 16, 2017) – The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Weather Service (NWS) Los Angeles/Oxnard office is forecasting a series of winter storms, scheduled to sweep through the Los Angeles County Operational Area Friday, February 17 through Saturday, February 18. These storms are expected to bring heavy rain and possibly thunderstorms that may trigger mud/debris flows in recent burn areas, urban flooding and strong winds that may down trees and power lines. The NWS Los Angeles/Oxnard office has also issued Flash Flood Watches for the Los Angeles County basin as well as the coast, valleys, and mountains areas that are in effect until Saturday, February 18.

“Los Angeles County Departments are working together to keep residents, especially in the recent burn and urban areas, safe during these winter storms,” said Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Jeff L. Reeb. “Our County has world-class first responders, but we need the public’s help in stepping up to take safety precautions to minimize the number of emergencies encountered during stormy weather.” Residents can take the following steps to keep safe and informed:

General Safety:

If you experience flash flooding, move to higher ground and/or the highest point in the house. Stay out of riverbeds and flood control channels during the storm. Water flow during storm is unpredictable and dangerous. Dial 9-1-1 if you see someone caught in a flood control channel. In the event of thunderstorms, take shelter in a sturdy building. Avoid isolated sheds, garages or small structures in open areas. Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. Follow evacuation orders issued by law enforcement agencies immediately – hesitating or not leaving may put you and your loved ones in life threatening danger.

Motorists:

Drive with your headlights on during rainy weather, and make sure your windshield wipers are working properly before rain starts.

Freeway flooding may happen – avoid driving in pooled water. Standing water is often deeper than it looks, and can conceal tire-damaging debris or make vehicles inoperable.

“Turn Around Don’t Drown.” Don’t attempt to cross swift moving water; as little as two feet of rushing water can sweep a vehicle away.

At Home and in the Community:

Power outages may happen – keep a working flashlight, and a battery operated radio handy. Help keep your neighborhood flood safe by parking vehicles and placing trash containers away from catch basins.

Avoid parking on streets that may be vulnerable to mud and debris flows.

Report clogged drains, blocked roads or fallen trees in the unincorporated areas by calling the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Dispatch at 1-800-675-HELP (4357).

Avoid beach areas. Storm surges may cause beach erosion and damaging high surf conditions with dangerous waves and rip currents to coastal areas.

Visit the Los Angeles County's Storm Season website at <http://www.lacounty.gov/LARain> to view tips on how to prepare your home, where to pick-up sandbags, and how to register for Alert LA County so that emergency messages are sent to your mobile telephone or e-mail.

Los Angeles County residents, renters, and business owners, including persons with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, may call 211 LA County for emergency preparedness information, and other referral services. The toll-free 2-1-1 number is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. 211 LA County services can also be accessed by visiting <http://211la.org>.

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