



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

Santa Barbara County Unveils New Storm Evacuation Definitions, Evacuation Timeline and Interactive Map

Santa Barbara - At both a press conference and "standing room only" community meeting in Montecito yesterday, February 8, 2018, new storm evacuation definitions, a 72-hour storm evacuation timeline, and an interactive map for Santa Barbara County were announced. Emergency officials reiterated that the threat following the storm and 1/9 debris flow is not over. There is a heightened danger for those who live below the Thomas Fire burn area due to the damaged condition of the watershed. Experts say that as a result, it will now take less rainfall to move debris than it did during the 1/9 debris flow event.

"We have to continue to get better and learn more from every disaster," said Santa Barbara County First District Supervisor Das Williams. "We want to prepare this community for the next event and for the continued clean-up."

Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management Director Rob Lewin said, "Let us not be fooled that the mountains have flushed the debris from the 1/9 debris flow. The mountains and the canyons are still loaded with rocks, sediment, and other debris."

Montecito Fire Protection District Division Chief Kevin Taylor said, "Our evacuation plan has been refined since the 1/9 debris flow. Our goal is to clearly communicate to you what the risk to you and your family is."

Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown said, "A strong possibility exists that we will need to call for future evacuations. While evacuations are inconvenient and troublesome, they are also temporary and incredibly important. Most importantly, they can be life-saving."

The three evacuation terms are as follows: **Pre-Evacuation Advisory**, **Recommended Evacuation Warning** and **Mandatory Evacuation Order**. The definitions for all three can be found on the County's website at www.ReadySBC.org under "Storm Readiness".

The new terminology aims to provide more clarity to residents in the event evacuations are necessary due to an approaching storm. Also unveiled, was an interactive map that residents can use to enter their address and determine if they are located in extreme or high-risk areas. The map can be accessed at www.ReadySBC.org/stormreadymap

The new plan also comes with a 72-hour storm evacuation timeline which outlines when the Sheriff's Office will issue the first pre-evacuation advisory, the recommended evacuation warning, and the mandatory evacuation order for residents in extreme and high-risk areas.

In addition to the new terms, timeline, and map, California Highway Patrol announced that two hours before a storm hits, CHP will close Highway 101 between Highway 150 and Milpas St. along with off-ramps in both directions. CHP Captain Cindy Pontes recognizes the inconvenience, but stresses the safety concerns. She said, "We thank you for your continued support and patience. We will persevere through this."

The new evacuation terms, the 72-hour timeline and the interactive map have all been posted on the newly unveiled www.ReadySBC.org website. This is very important information that we want the public to become educated about and familiar with NOW in advance of a storm.

Please remember that our top priority is always your safety and protection. It is everyone's responsibility to prepare now by understanding what steps we will take to protect you if a storm hits, but also what steps you can take ahead of time to protect yourself and your family.

Please go to www.ReadySBC.org now and review this important information and make sure you are signed up for alerts.