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CITY OF PALMDALE

NEWS RELEASE

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City of Palmdale Urges Residents to Prepare for Rain

PALMDALE – With experts estimating that this year’s El Nino winter storms will be their strongest in years, and rain forecasted for this week, the City of Palmdale is urging residents to be prepared.

The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood watch with a series of storms expected to bring periods of heavy rain and a threat of mud and debris flows to recent burn areas on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The City of Palmdale has sandbags available for residents free of charge at the City’s Maintenance Yard, located at 39110 3rd St. East, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 6 pm.

Residents are also encouraged to stay informed. “A good resource for storm information and tips is the Web site www.lacounty.gov/elnino,” said Palmdale Communications Manager John Mlynar. “It provides storm-related resources including safety tips, weather forecasts, and information for homeowners affected by floods and mudslides. Additionally, visitors can find info guides, PSAs, and a dedicated Twitter feed of first responder agencies tweeting about this year’s storms. It is mobile-friendly and can be instantly translated into 90 languages.”

The City of Palmdale’s Public Works crews began their preparations for the winter season in October. Among the steps taken included:

- Inspecting all storm basins and flood channels. Making sure they are clean, free of debris and functioning

- Making sandbags
- Putting snow plows on trucks
- Budgeting
- Arranging for contractors
- Inspecting sewers

“We always encourage our residents to prepare for emergencies as we live in an area that is susceptible to earthquakes, fires and floods,” Mlynar said. “In a major disaster it may be several days before help arrives. Residents should set aside enough food, water and other necessities to ‘shelter in place’ for a minimum of three days.”

Other resources for disaster preparedness include www.ready.gov, www.antelopevalleycert.com, and www.redcross.org/ca/los-angeles.

Storms, Floods & Mudslides: Tips and Information

This information is provided courtesy of the County of Los Angeles’ Emergency Survival Guide.

Before a Flood

1. Assess the safety of your house and belongings in case of a flood or mudslide.
 - Are you near a creek?
 - Do you live above or below a steep hillside?
 - Do you have to drive over a creek or bridge to get to a main road?

2. Clean drains and gutters around the house in the fall before the winter rains come.
3. If diversion of water or mud is necessary, plan to fill sandbags well before the rain starts; sandbags are available at your local fire stations. Take time now to find out what fire station serves your area and learn proper placement of sandbags. Sand bags are also available at the City's maintenance yard, located at 39110 3rd Street East across from Desert Sands Park.
4. If you live in a hilly area, maintain all slopes in a safe manner. Use appropriate plantings, slope coverage, and drainage channels.

When It's Raining

Plan to arrive at your location before it starts raining and remain there until well after the storm. Burned logs, boulders, mud and other debris can create temporary dams which burst days after the rain has stopped. This could be hours or sometimes even days after the rain has stopped. Be particularly alert when driving. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other hazards. Bridges may be washed out, and culverts overtopped. When you see water across a roadway, there is no way to see whether the road under the water has been washed away. The water may be much more deep and powerful than you expect.

During the Flood

- Do not cross rapidly flowing streams. Stay on one side until the water recedes.
Most streams will go down in a couple of hours, once it stops raining.
- During a storm, check drainage systems at your home and driveways to maintain a safe situation and limit damage.

- Watch for mudslides and adjust drainage to reduce mudslides.
- If you notice a major mud slippage either above or below your house, move your family to a safe location. If you need emergency assistance, call 9-1-1.

After the Flood

- Don't return to your flood-damaged home before the area is declared to be safe by law enforcement and health officials.
- Assess damage; check hillsides, houses, etc. for slope movement, settling, and water damage.
- Following a storm, drive slowly and carefully as many roads may have mud, debris, holes, and washed-out areas. This is particularly true when driving around public works and other public safety personnel are doing cleanup efforts.
- Remember, many mudslides occur as the soil dries after an extended wet period, so a mudslide may take place several days after the rain stops.
- Winter is often the best time to plant slopes, so make plans and fix any problems areas before the rainy season begins

Additional Tips

- Have a plan in place before an evacuation is ordered. The safest plan is to stay with friends or family during all rainstorms in which a flash flood watch or warning has been declared for your area.

- Teach your children to stay away from all rivers, creeks, arroyos, drainage control channels and washes.
- Teach all family members about the watch and warning system.
- Determine in advance how you will stay informed about the latest flood and flash flood watches, warnings, and weather advisories.
- Talk to your neighbors about their plans, and encourage them to plan to get out early.
- Pay attention to local news and social media from local government and public safety agencies for information on what to do during an emergency incident.

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