



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Officials Urge Preparation for More Cold, Wet Weather Cold Weather Poses Risk to Pets and Lower Snow Levels Make Some Travel Tricky

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) urges Californians to prepare for more wet weather, bringing additional rainfall and high winds as well as an increased likelihood of mudslides and debris flows in and around watersheds that were recently burned.

"We're in for more cold weather, gusty winds and heavier rainfall that could cause urban and small stream flooding this afternoon and evening," said Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen of the California Emergency Management Agency. "It is important that all Californians prepare for this winter weather, especially those living near an area burned by fires. We could see some potentially dangerous mudflows if the rain is heavy enough, so we all need to pay close attention," said Bettenhausen. Some periods of heavy rain are expected to continue through Monday evening, with showers lessening early Tuesday.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department is urging residents living in the burn areas of the recent wildfires to be aware of the potential debris flow dangers. "There will be a strong possibility of evacuations in the burn areas of the San Gabriel Foothills due to the severity of the incoming storm. Residents in the burn areas need to monitor your radio and television news closely for information concerning weather conditions and flooding in your area" said a news release issued Monday morning.

Cal EMA officials remind people living in and below the burn areas caused by recent fires to keep an eye on their houses and landscape for signs that a landslide or mudflow may be imminent. Sounds such as a faint rumbling that increases in volume, cracking tree limbs and boulders knocking together are examples of imminent danger. Other signs to look for include: slope bases that appear to have new bulges; tilted fences, trees, retaining walls and utility poles; newly jammed doors and windows; newly cracked plaster, tile, bricks and foundations; as well as the appearance of cracks in streets, driveways and other paved areas that are slowly developing or widening.

According to the National Weather Service, snow levels are dropping dramatically both in Southern and Northern California. Blizzard-like conditions are expected on the Grapevine along Interstate 5 this evening beginning around 4 pm.

Temperatures are also expected to get frigid Monday evening into early Tuesday morning, into the single digits in the mountain areas. That could drop snow levels down to 1,500 feet, according to National Weather Service reports. Residents should pay particular attention to their pets. All pets need adequate shelter from the elements and insulation against cold weather. Pets should not be left outside for long periods in freezing weather - like humans, they can suffer from hypothermia and frostbite. The young and the senior pets are especially at risk.

Travelers should check with CalTrans for the latest conditions before heading out onto the roadways – they can call the Caltrans Highway Information Network (CHIN) at 800.427.7623 for automated information.

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In response to the weather conditions Cal EMA has:

- Conducted conference calls with the National Weather Service and state agencies to coordinate readiness based on the best available weather forecast information;
- Reached out to and encouraged state and local agencies to ensure their readiness for this week's series of storm;
- Prepared for potential opening of the State Operations Center at Cal EMA Headquarters and Regional Emergency Operations Centers (REOCs) in Los Alamitos, Oakland and Sacramento

Officials also recommend Californians should prepare for all potential disasters by assembling an emergency supply kit that includes enough food and drinking water for 3 days, first aid supplies, a battery operated radio and flashlight. Residents should identify what important items to take if an evacuation of an area is necessary such as computers, photos, important documents, medications, and other important items for your family and pets.

"Having a battery operated radio is important because it is the first step in having access to the latest information about the weather and any emergency instructions from local officials," said Bettenhausen.

More information about storm preparedness is available on Cal EMA home page at www.calema.ca.gov.

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