



City of  
**SANTA CLARITA**

# **READY** FOR **RAIN**

**INCLEMENT WEATHER  
PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

**2017-18**

***City of Santa Clarita***  
**Inclement Weather Preparedness Plan**

**Summary**

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts normal to below average rainfall for the 2017-18 wet season. In accordance with established procedures, City staff formed an Inclement Weather Preparedness Team comprised of City divisions which included: Parks, Special Districts, Facilities Maintenance, Streets, Urban Forestry, Open Space, Environmental Services, and Traffic and Transportation Planning. These divisions oversee landscape, storm water drainage systems, and traffic for the City and are vital to the success of this plan. Additionally, this Inclement Weather Preparedness Team met with representatives for the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to ensure open lines of communications, should the City experience severe weather conditions.

The purpose of the Inclement Weather Preparedness Team has been to review the City's inclement and emergency weather procedures and list of proactive preparation methods to help reduce potential impacts to the community throughout the wet season. As part of this effort, the Team has identified numerous "vulnerable locations" throughout the City that may be more prone to flooding and debris flow during above-average rainfall, which continue to include the Sand Fire and Calgrove Fire burn areas as well as the recent Placerita Fire area. These vulnerable locations have been categorized by type and prioritized according to the potential impact on the public's safety. City staff will continue to utilize an internal mobile map application to display these locations, which enable staff to efficiently patrol these areas during inclement weather situations.

Furthermore, this plan contains strategic communication outreach efforts to inform and educate residents about the importance of maintaining and preparing their private property for the 2017-18 wet season.

**Section 1: Standard Practices and Procedures**

The City has long-standing proactive procedures for predicted inclement weather seasons. The following actions (by division) will continue to be implemented in an effort to minimize the impacts of storms.

**Inclement Weather Actions—Before the Rain**

**Streets**

All public right-of-ways (streets) are cleared of debris, and areas that may require sand bags or K-rails are identified prior to rainfall. In addition, flood signs are strategically placed citywide to help warn residents of flood prone areas.

### Storm Drains

All City-owned storm drains, parkway drains, and channels are maintained year round and are closely monitored during storm events. As part of standard general maintenance practices, storm drains are cleaned four times per year, while City-maintained retention basins/water quality devices are cleaned bi-annually. Additionally, staff proactively posts appropriate signage to help warn residents of flood-prone areas.

### Parks

Parks grounds and buildings are inspected for potential hazards prior to heavy rainfall. Staff ensures surface drainage pipes are clear, grates are not clogged or covered, and debris or material stockpiles are removed from any drainage courses that run through City parks.

### Open Space/Trails

City staff identifies and strategically prepares a recovery plan for vulnerable open space areas during heavy rainfall, which are more prone to damage. If needed, staff will close open space areas during rain events to prevent accidents to trail users and further damage to trailheads and trails.

### Urban Forestry

City-owned and maintained trees are pruned by staff, keeping the tree canopies in optimal condition. All potentially hazardous trees are mitigated through pruning and/or removed if necessary. Tree equipment is frequently inspected to ensure it is in good working condition and readily available in an event of severe rainfall.

### Facilities

City staff inspects facility roof tops and cleans debris that may obstruct water flow in rain gutters. Drains and channels are also inspected to ensure they are functioning properly.

### Construction Sites

Forty-eight hours prior to forecasted rain, inspections are conducted at construction sites to confirm the sites are secured, have a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan in place, and the proper Best Management Practices (BMPs) are installed. This ensures all properties under construction have been prepared to prevent mud and debris from flowing onto the street or nearby areas.

### Special Districts

The Landscape Maintenance District (LMD) operation examines swales and directs landscape crews to remedy any hillside where debris has collected to ensure rain water flows unobstructed to the street or directly into storm drains. This includes LMD-maintained slopes and parks maintained under landscape maintenance contracts.

### Erosion Control

Plant material lost due to water restrictions and hot temperatures are continuously replaced to address erosion, provided there is adequate time between the start of cooler weather and the beginning of heavy rains for plants to establish strong roots.

## **Standard Operating Procedures During a Storm**

The City currently uses a standard operating procedure to classify and proclaim a state of inclement weather.

### Purpose

This procedure serves to provide staff with detailed information on how to react to the announcement of a state of inclement weather in the City of Santa Clarita.

### Procedure

1. After notifying the City Manager, the Director of Public Works (Director) or designee will declare an inclement weather event.
2. A Public Works Supervisor will then mobilize the Inclement Weather Team at approximately 3:00 a.m. to examine road conditions, storm drains, and established vulnerable locations citywide. The Inclement Weather Team that is mobilized will be comprised of Public Works field employees.
3. Staff will examine roads and other areas within the City of Santa Clarita and discuss findings with their Supervisor by 5:00 a.m.
4. The Public Works Supervisor will brief and provide recommendations to the Director by telephone or in person no later than 6:00 a.m.
5. The Director will decide whether or not to begin a '12 hours on, 12 hours off' work schedule for designated field employees. This decision will be made by 6:30 a.m.
6. The Director will notify the Communications division and other departments of any road closures or major flooding.
7. Prior to any event, the Public Works department will setup a hotline for incoming calls and designate clerical staff to answer the public's questions or take service requests. This hotline aims to reduce confusion for field staff responding to resident requests.

### Traffic

During severe inclement weather conditions, a Los Angeles County Sheriff deputy or designee will report to the Traffic Operations Center, located on the third floor of City Hall, to help facilitate effective communication lines between City staff and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) for road closures, traffic detouring, and traffic control assistance.

### Hazard Analysis and Documentation

When responding to, or identifying, potential hazards, all field staff is required to use proper personnel equipment, such as protective eyewear, ear wear, rain jackets, rain boots, etc. Staff will provide written documentation, including photos, for all hazards identified.

### Landscape Maintenance District (LMD)

During severe weather conditions, all LMD contractors, which are contractually obligated to respond to emergencies within a predetermined time frame, should respond as follows:

- Within regular business hours – 15-minute call back time.
- Outside of normal business hours – 30-minute call back time.

- Personnel and equipment must be made available within two hours.

LMD maintenance contractors will provide their own equipment, should it be needed. If LMD requires heavy equipment, staff will contact the Stormwater, Streets, or Parks divisions for assistance.

### Inspection Services

Both Building & Safety and Engineering Services inspectors will respond to resident requests for inspection and damage assessment. Structures deemed unsafe to occupy will be posted with a yellow or red placard.

### **State of Emergency Procedure—When Conditions Become Severe**

When conditions surpass regular inclement weather conditions, the City Manager will authorize the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The City EOC is the location where information/intelligence is gathered, verified, and documented. All emergency public information and necessary field support is coordinated and disseminated from the EOC. The EOC activation is the same for all emergency/disasters.

Primary City Location: City Hall - Century Room

Alternate City Location: Transit Maintenance Facility Training Room and Conference Room

### Local Emergency Declaration

A local emergency can be proclaimed when conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of people/property are likely to exceed resources and capabilities of the City of Santa Clarita. By City ordinance, the City Manager, Mayor, or City Council may proclaim a local emergency.

For Los Angeles County, it is the Board of Supervisors, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, the Chief Administrative Officer or the Sheriff (in that order) who may proclaim a local emergency. It is not necessary for a city to proclaim an emergency if the county proclaims an emergency for the entire geographic county area or for a specific area that includes the City.

When the City proclaims a local emergency, or is under the County-proclaimed emergency it provides:

- immunity from negligence
- authority to promulgate emergency orders and regulations
- (confers) extraordinary police powers
- exceptions to statutorily mandated procedures
- first step in process to access state/federal disaster relief programs

### **Section 2: Proactive Planning for 2017-2018 Wet Season**

In addition to the standard practices and procedures already in place, staff has created an all-

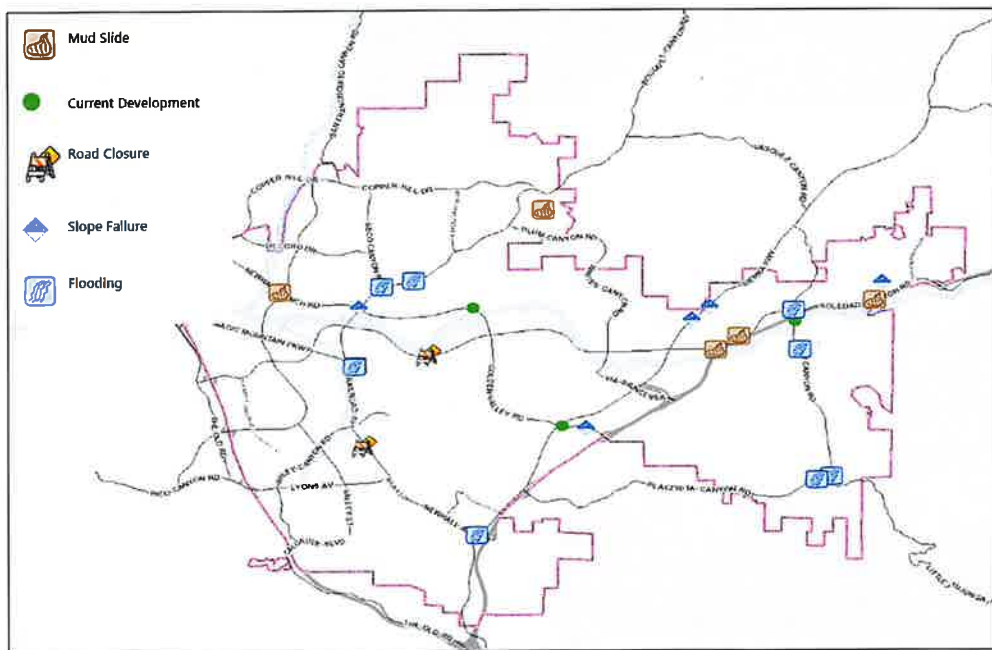
inclusive list of potential problematic areas (vulnerable locations) throughout the City that will require extra attention and resources in the event of severe rain.

### Vulnerable Locations Identified

Vulnerable locations were identified by various City divisions and categorized by type of impact due to heavy rainfall. Staff categorized these locations throughout the City into one of the following four categories:

- Potential flooding
- Potential slope failure
- Potential mud/debris accumulation
- Active development sites/potential mud flows

All areas were discussed and plotted on a web-based mobile application created by GIS that can be accessed by City staff 24/7\* (pictured below). City staff can use the map to patrol these areas when heavy rainfall begins and concentrate resources in areas with the greatest potential for property damage or that have an impact on public safety.



\*Locations plotted on the map above are used as a visual demonstration and do not accurately reflect the final version of the map.

The map displayed above will be finalized and available internally. Using this application, staff will be able to keep an active log of problematic areas affected by inclement weather conditions, capture photographs, and update information immediately. This tool will coordinate response efforts and improve efficiency and accuracy during periods of heavy rainfall.

### **Other Priority Areas**

Special attention will be given to specific areas in the City that do not fit into the categories mentioned in the section above and are categorized as a high priority for immediate action before rainfall occurs.

#### Open Space Trails

From an open space and open space trails perspective, Wildwood Canyon, which burned in early 2016, will be a concern during the upcoming rainy season. There is a multi-agency approach to monitoring the area and notifying residents of any impact. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, both the Los Angeles County Fire and Sheriff's departments, along with the City of Santa Clarita have worked cooperatively to provide mitigation measures and community information. During an event, all agencies will be monitoring this area and respond accordingly.

#### Homeless Shelter

The City contracts with Bridge to Home to operate an Emergency Homeless Shelter, located on Drayton Street in Newhall. The current site of the shelter and along that portion of Drayton Street has been subject to flooding and mud slides in previous storms that produce above-average rain. City staff is committed to working with the County and surrounding property owners to possibly install temporary K-rails that could minimize the effects of storm damage.

#### Recent Burn Areas

The City of Santa Clarita will implement a color alert system to alert residents and property owners who live in the Sand Fire, Calgrove Fire, and Placerita Fire burn areas of an evacuation. Since it can take between three and five years for vegetation to be re-established, properties in the recent burn area may be susceptible to sudden mud flows during severe rain storms. The color system provides alerts on an evacuation status, and is coordinated with the City, and the Los Angeles County Fire and Sheriff's departments.

Residents in the affected area are encouraged to sign up for the alerts through the following methods:

- Online (for texting and email alerts): <http://www.santa-clarita.com/ealerts>
- Mobile (for texting alerts): Text **SCEMERGENCY to 888777**

Additional alerts will be sent through social media, the City's website, and local radio.

### **Emergency Protocols for Possible Flooding/Mud/Debris Flow Events:**

#### Green Level

- No evacuation orders in effect
- No rain-related parking restrictions in effect
- Residents are encouraged to monitor weather conditions and be aware of alert changes
- No restricted entry to any City/County areas

### Yellow Level

- No evacuation orders in effect
- Rain-related parking restrictions in effect
- Residents directed to remove vehicles, trash bins, and other obstructions from streets and/or travel lanes, as they will be subject to tow or removal by authorities
- No restricted entry to impact area/potentially impacted areas

### Orange Level

- Voluntary evacuation orders in effect
- Residents directed to remove vehicles, trash bins, and other obstructions from streets and/or travel lanes prior to evacuating, as they will be subject to tow or removal by authorities
- Residents will be directed to a designated Evacuation Center
- Those persons staying should move to the highest point within their home
- Residents who voluntarily evacuate will be afforded the opportunity to re-gain entry to their residential area at the discretion of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department upon providing proof of residency

### Red Level

- Mandatory evacuation order in effect. All residents ordered to leave the impacted and/or potentially impacted areas
- Residents directed to remove vehicles, trash bins, and other obstructions from the streets and/or travel lanes prior to evacuating; as they will be subject to tow or removal by authorities
- Entry into the area shall be prohibited to all persons except public safety first responders
- Residents will not be allowed to return to their homes so long as the "red level" protocol remains in effect
- If conditions are unsafe to evacuate, residents should move to the highest safe place in their residence and shelter in place

### Re-Entry Protocols

- Only persons and vehicles authorized by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) will be permitted to enter secured/impacted/potentially impacted areas
- Only residents (with proof of residency) and their authorized relatives/contractors/assistance workers will be permitted to enter secured/impacted/potentially impacted areas, with LASD approval

**Re-entry protocols will be based on the status of the debris flow potential of the Sand Fire, Calgrove Fire, and Placerita Fire burned areas.**



## **Other Proactive Measures**

### **Traffic & Transportation Planning**

Traffic and Transportation Planning routinely inspects signalized intersections that are susceptible to signal failures during heavy rainfall, and proactively re-wires them to avoid malfunctions. Additionally, the City has installed back-up systems at major signalized intersections along major corridors citywide, which include upgraded systems that monitor battery levels and automatically notify City staff if levels drop lower than acceptable operable limits.

### **Los Angeles County**

As a contract city utilizing Los Angeles County Fire and Sheriff services in Santa Clarita, it is important to include the following sections of the Los Angeles County plan in the Santa Clarita Inclement Weather Preparedness Plan.

### **Fire Department**

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (Fire Department) provides fire protection and life safety services to over 50 cities and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The Fire Department provides services to over four million residents, and protects thousands of acres of watershed. The Fire Department takes a comprehensive approach in its emergency preparedness planning for winter storms and related flood and debris flows. This includes a proactive approach and ongoing communication with their staff, their assisting agencies, and the general public by addressing the following:

- Public education about swiftwater and mud/debris flow through pre-identified burned and mudslide prone areas through our local fire personnel and the media.
- Daily monitoring of weather and early identification of required staffing
- Pre-season training to include swiftwater training, validation of proper equipment, safety messaging to employees, and ensuring operational readiness
- Pre-deployment of sand and sandbags at fire stations and other fire department administrative sites

Operational readiness will be augmented in advance of adverse weather by pre-deploying additional resources, such as swift water teams and helicopters, to provide quick transportation and support rescue operations.

### **Sheriff's Department**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will also be active in their preparation prior to storms. In advance of storm season, the Sheriff's Department will:

- Review emergency operations procedures, storm and mud-flow warnings, and wildfire procedures during in-service briefings for all patrol personnel
- Perform the annual inspection of each patrol unit to ensure wildfire/storm and mud-flow supplemental emergency plans are in place
- Distribute hazard maps (when applicable) to patrol stations of burn areas and potential

- flood/mud flow locations to include critical infrastructure checklists
- Distribute Emergency Connex Boxes to each patrol unit containing Meals Ready to Eat, sleeping bags, and other emergency supplies
- Distribute sandbags to each patrol unit for public distribution
- Coordinate with other County departments and mutual aid cities for collective public information dissemination via Alert L.A. County and social media
- Coordinate with mutual aid agencies for resources and assistance

#### City of Santa Clarita Communications Plan

The “Inclement Weather” outreach campaign will inform residents, specifically those living near recent fire burn areas, of the City’s role before, during, and after inclement weather, as well as provide residents with important information and resources to help get through an inclement weather incident. The outreach effort will also educate residents of the Color Alert System and provide answers to frequently asked questions about evacuation processes.

- City Website – The “Ready for Rain” website has been updated with full messaging and evacuation status for the Sand Fire and Calgrove Fire burn areas, FAQs, and graphics
- Press Release – Press release will be drafted suggesting residents living near recent fire burn areas to visit the City’s Ready for Rain website for resources and information
- Rack Card – Rack cards will be distributed at City facilities detailing tips on what to do before, during, and after inclement weather, and a cheat sheet on the Evacuation Color Alert System
- Digital Signage – Bus signage targeting areas that are near recent fire burn areas.
- NIXLE 360 – The Nixle 360 Emergency Notification System will be used to notify residents of evacuation orders. Evacuation statuses will be communicated via a color alert system
- Emergency Updates Blog – Emergency updates will be posted on the City’s Emergency Updates Blog <http://santaclaritaemergency.com/>
- Social Media – Social media posts will be utilized to help educate residents of the available resources on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- eNotify – eNotify messages will be sent to all relevant lists to provide an update on City’s actions and plans