



# COUNTY OF INYO

## ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE/OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES/SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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### JOINT PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## FLASH FLOOD THREAT UPGRADED TO 'EXTREME' 'FOR INYO COUNTY'

The National Weather Service-Las Vegas announced this morning it has "high confidence" in flash flooding for Inyo County over the next several days, and has upgraded Inyo County's risk level to "extreme."

With Hurricane Hilary moving closer to the West Coast, the rainfall forecast has increased since yesterday, with 50-100 % of yearly annual rainfall anticipated over the next 5 days. Some locations, like Death Valley, may see that much rainfall in 24 hours.

Major to historic levels of flooding are forecast, especially in Death Valley. Bishop is at a major risk level. For context, the NWS for this region cannot recall ever having an "extreme" flash flooding level before, and even categorizing a risk level "major" is not very common.

Rainfall will be intermittent, with rounds of moderate to heavy rainfall, and is likely to persist overnight. Most impacts are expected Saturday through Tuesday.

The NWS and local first responders cannot stress enough the importance of **STORM PREPAREDNESS**. Once the rainfall starts, it is unlikely to improve until Hilary moves away.

Local first responders are on alert – with Inyo County Road Crews on standby – and will be particularly focused on vulnerable areas. Local creeks and streams are already running high due to this season's historic runoff and could flood with more heavy rain. Burn scars, dry washes, slot canyons, and any areas downstream of steep, hilly, or mountainous (rocky) terrain are also at risk for flash floods.

Residents and visitors are warned that there will be heightened potential for flash flooding during this storm event, and they should take precautions to protect themselves and their property. Sandbags are available at Inyo County fire stations ([Sandbag Locations - March 9 2023.pdf \(dropbox.com\)](#)).

According to the NWS, more deaths occur every year due to floods than from any other thunderstorm related hazard. Most of those deaths result from driving through flood waters and the second-most deaths are attributable to walking in or near a flooded area. A mere 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock over an adult. It takes just 12 inches of rushing water to carry away most cars, and two feet to sweep away SUVs and trucks. Don't underestimate the power and force of water. It is NEVER safe to walk or drive in flood waters.

Other safety tips include:

- **Stay Informed:** Listen to radio and television, including NOAA Weather Radio if possible, and check trusted internet and social media sources.
- **Get to Higher Ground:** If you live in a flood-prone area or are camping in a low-lying area, get to higher ground immediately.
- **Obey Evacuation Orders:** If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Lock your home when you leave and if you have time, disconnect utilities and appliances.
- **Practice Electrical Safety:** Don't go into a basement, or any room, if water covers the electrical outlets or if cords are submerged. If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping, or popping noises – get out! Stay out of water that may have electricity in it!

The NWS urges residents and visitors to take action should the Flood Watch be upgraded to Flash Flood Warnings. Even after Tropical Storm Hilary moves away, lingering residual moisture could necessitate ongoing vigilance.

## RESOURCES AND ALERTS

Current information as well as links to key resources can be found at the Office of Emergency Service's website, <https://ready.inyocounty.us>.

Current weather updates can be found at: <https://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php...>

Individuals who do not have access to the internet and ability to use the Ready Inyo website are encouraged to call 2-1-1. This non-emergency phone service will provide information similar to what is maintained on the Ready Inyo website, as well as the ability to access other County resources via phone. Anyone seeking more information about the storm and storm response is urged to call this number – NOT 9-1-1, which is intended for life safety issues only.

Residents not currently signed up for CodeRED may do so at any time. It is the number one mechanism for informing residents during a local emergency or disaster. CodeRED is an opt-in, high-speed notification solution that quickly delivers emergency messages to targeted areas or the entire county. Because the notifications are geographically based, a street address is required to ensure emergency notification calls are received by the proper individuals in a given situation. If your cell phone number has changed, or you have moved, or if you are new to the area please register at: <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/DAD807D480BF>.

IPAWS is FEMA's national system for local alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life-saving information to the public through mobile phones using Wireless Emergency Alerts, to radio and television via the Emergency Alert System, and on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio.

You will receive a CodeRED/IPAWS if the Sheriff's Office determines that there is an imminent threat to life or safety. You will not receive a notification for non-emergent issues.

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