



*"A Professional Service Agency"*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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11:00 a.m.

CONTACT: Carma Roper, Public Information Officer  
(760) 878-0395

**UPDATE ON MAJOR MUDSLIDES AND FLOODING**

A local emergency was declared as flooding and mudslides devastated areas of Inyo County last night. "All dwellings have been cleared in the Oak Creek / West Fort Independence area," stated Independence Fire Chief, Mark Felton. A property damage assessment is anticipated for late this afternoon. CHP and Forest Service helicopters are assisting in an aerial assessment of the effected areas.

At this time, California Highway Patrol is escorting all vehicles north of Independence through the effected flood-zone on highway 395. "There is still a significant amount of debris on the road," said CHP Sergeant, Rich Underwood. "The north-bound lane is open to small groups of cars; motorcycles and vehicles with low ground clearance are being diverted through the East Fort Independence area," concluded Underwood.

Evacuations are in effect in the following areas:

- Oak Creek / West Fort Independence
- Fort Independence Camp Ground
- East Fort Independence flood-zone (voluntary)
- Grays Meadows area (voluntary)
- Whitney Portal Campground (voluntary)

An evacuation Center is still currently in operation at the Owens Valley School on Clay Street in Independence.

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*Office of the*  
**SHERIFF**  
**INYO COUNTY, CA**



**WILLIAM R. LUTZE**  
*Sheriff*

**JOHN N. EROPKIN**  
*Undersheriff*

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According to the National Weather Service, flash flood warnings are in effect until late this evening. "It is essential that citizens take an active role in their safety, no one should be entering flood-zones," said Inyo County Sheriff, Bill Lutze.

FEMA offers the following tips to stay safe during and after flooding:

During a flood:

- If flooding directly effects you, please remember to go to higher ground – get out of areas subject to flooding; this includes dips, low spots, canyons, and washes.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- Roadbeds may be washed out. NEVER drive through flooded roadways. If your vehicle is suddenly caught in rising water, leave it immediately and seek higher ground.

After the Storm:

- Do not turn electricity back on in your home if you detect gas or if the electrical system has been flooded.
- Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by floodwaters or mudflows and throw out any such foodstuffs.
- Follow directions from local officials regarding the safety of drinking water.

Please be advised that the Inyo County jail has cancelled all visitations for today.

-End-

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