



COUNTY OF INYO

ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE/
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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Prepare NOW for Incoming Storm

Inyo County Administration, Office of Emergency Services, and Sheriff's Office are urging residents to prepare now for an incoming weather event which could bring higher elevation snowfall and lower elevation rain resulting in potential flooding, road closures, avalanche, and other hazards.

The [National Weather Service, Las Vegas, Nevada](#) has forecast a warm atmospheric river storm to arrive Thursday evening, with another one projected to begin early next week. Both storm systems will impact Inyo County with rain on snow which can trigger avalanches and flooding at lower elevations.

A Winter Storm Warning has been issued for elevations above 7,000 feet, and a Flood Watch was issued for locations below 7,000 feet, beginning Thursday afternoon and ending Saturday night. The snowpack is well above average in these areas, and the rain will add to the runoff and increase the flooding potential in the Owens Valley. In higher elevations, rain may mix in with the snow resulting in heavy wet snow causing high snow load on buildings and increasing the risk of roof collapse.

EVACUATIONS

With the threat of likely road closures and potential for avalanche, Aspendell residents are urged to evacuate early while it is safe and possible to still do so. Inyo County and CalTrans will not be performing snow removal activities until risk to personnel has abated, so residents should be prepared to be snowed in their homes, should they choose to not leave. Rescue operations, should they be necessary, may be impractical or slow to react.

PREPARATIONS

Residents and business owners in flood-prone areas are strongly urged to prepare ahead of time with sandbags and stock up on essentials – food, water, medicine, firewood, flashlights, etc. – in the event of impeded travel, power outages, road closures, and limited emergency resources. Sandbags are available at the Bishop, Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, and Olancho-Cartago volunteer fire departments.

ROADS

CalTrans and Inyo County placed parking restrictions in the Bishop Creek drainage yesterday. Crews will be working overtime to respond to plowing needs; however, please keep in mind that the plows will not be operating after dark. Residents at higher elevations should consider alternate accommodations early. The first priority for crews will be clearing thoroughfares that allow first responders to access critical facilities. Also, be aware: if a road is closed by the County, that means the entire road is closed, not just a portion. Motorists are encouraged to obey all road closures, so that limited first-responder resources can focus on emergencies and not vehicles stuck in the snow.

RECREATION

The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center is encouraging “considerate travel choices and strategic parking” by backcountry users who decide to venture out during the storm. Blocking snow drifts, travel routes, and snow piles makes it impossible for road crews to do their job. The threat of avalanche in areas like Aspendell, Mono City, and June Lake is high; with so much snow coverage at lower elevations this winter, recent avalanches have been running farther, impacting roadways and buildings in these areas. Triggering an avalanche above infrastructure could have devastating consequences. Please recognize that any incident will place undue stress on a first-responder system which is already stretched thin.

LOCAL ALERTING

CodeRED 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.

READY INYO

The Office of Emergency Services has set up a new website at <https://ready.inyocounty.us>. This resource is designed to serve as an authoritative source to provide current information as well as links to key resources. Incident managers will be posting regular updates on the status of the event and key actions/activities including road conditions, sheltering, and other details to this site.

2-1-1

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.

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