



COUNTY OF INYO

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

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DAMAGE BEING ASSESSED, FLOODING CONTINUES

Inyo County, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and allied agencies continue to take stock of the widespread damage caused by the remnants of Tropical Storm Hilary moving through the region Sunday and Monday.

Inyo County Administrator Nate Greenberg declared a local emergency on Monday, while agencies' personnel continue to work countywide to actively survey and evaluate the damage and respond to emerging threats from ongoing flooding.

High waters from Lone Pine Creek flooded Whitney Portal Road earlier in the day today and necessitated an Evacuation Order from the Inyo County Sheriff's Office for the area on the north side of Whitney Portal Road, west of Horseshoe Meadows Road. Inyo County Health & Human Services opened an Evacuation Center at its Lone Pine offices, 310 N. Jackson St. Six structures – all unoccupied – were threatened. Lubken Canyon Road is being used as a detour for Whitney Portal, which was heavily damaged on top of impacts received during the spring and summer runoff.

An earlier Evacuation Order was issued when Oak Creek outside of Independence also overran its banks, flooding U.S. 395. The highway has been reduced to a single lane while maintenance crews work to clear the path.

Both orders remain in effect. An Evacuation Order is a lawful order to leave now, issued due to the immediate threat to life. The area under order is lawfully closed to public access. By contrast, an Evacuation Warning is issued in response to potential threat to life/property and gives advance warning to those who may need extra time to prepare for evacuation.

Local waters – already swollen with unprecedented amounts of runoff – were inundated Sunday and Monday by record amounts of rainfall over a period of less than 12 hours, resulting in extreme flooding and mud flow into creeks, canals, and the Los Angeles Aqueduct (LAA). The high flows in creeks destroyed or damaged most of LADWP diversion and flow measurement structures between the towns of Big Pine and Olancho. Five state highways and more than two dozen county roads sustained significant damage in the storm and remain closed, including State Route 190 in Death Valley National Park. The park itself remains closed.

Damage to S.R. 190 is extensive. State Route 136 is also closed in both directions as a result of water crossing the highway. Motorists are urged not to attempt driving on these roads. Residents in the communities of Keeler, Darwin, and Panamint Valley who need assistance – or any individuals impacted by flooding – may call the non-emergency 2-1-1 phone line.

Caltrans maintenance crews are actively working to reopen the highways in both Inyo and Kern counties. Updates on all Caltrans' road closures are being posted to its social media platforms. County Road crews are likewise busy assessing damage and working to reopen various routes. Updates can be found on the Inyo County Sheriff's Office's Facebook and Instagram pages.

LADWP is utilizing all of its resources, including the request from Los Angeles to support its Operations in Inyo County to help excavate and bail out sand and sediment buildup in the LAA and surrounding waterways. The main work area is the Lone Pine sand trap, where crews are attempting to keep up with sand and debris flow and retain LAA operation. Added resources and equipment have been mobilized. The biggest issue crews are facing is that the creek and sediment are currently too high, making it hard to catch up with sand/debris flow.

Jurisdictions to the north of Inyo County appear to have fared better. "The Town of Mammoth Lakes and Police Department experienced heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Hilary but fortunately, had no major incidents," a Town spokesperson said. "On Sunday afternoon, a large boulder slid down on to John Muir Road. Crews were able to move it before it caused any traffic collisions. Several visitors were delayed in their closures and to stay away from the river and creeks. Banks have been overrun with water and there is a large departure or took alternate routes due to the closure of Highway 395 on Monday. The Town extends our wishes to our neighboring counties who experienced far more disruption."

The story was similar for the County of Mono. "While the county was fully prepared, the impacts of Tropical Storm Hilary were minimal in Mono County. We have received no reports of flooding or damage to local roads or highways. We are grateful for the pre-positioning of resources and equipment throughout the county from the Mono County Fire Districts, and appreciate the MWTC Fire Department for having their swift water rescue team available," a spokesperson said.

LADWP, the Sheriff's Office, and Inyo County Office of Emergency Services urge the public to obey all road closures and to stay away from the Owens and River and local creeks. Banks have been overrun with water and there is a large amount of mud and debris in many areas.

RESOURCES

Sandbags are still available at Inyo County fire stations ([Sandbag Locations - March 9 2023.pdf \(dropbox.com\)](#)).

Road closure updates 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.

For the latest information on Caltrans road closures and other highway conditions, download the Quickmap app to your iOS or Android device or visit quickmap.dot.ca.gov. You can also call the Road Condition Hotline at 1-800-427-ROAD (7623).

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