



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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Storm Impacts Widespread

RESIDENTS URGED TO SHELTER IN PLACE IF POSSIBLE

UPDATE – 2:35 p.m. – Lone Pine Airport has been reopened to the public. Flights are still coming in and out of the Bishop Airport, and the Independence Airport remains closed. All County landfills will be closed until further notice.

1 P.M. - As predicted, the warm atmospheric river event that arrived in the Eastern Sierra Thursday has brought significant rain to lower elevations and snowfall in the higher elevations, causing widespread flooding, road closures, avalanches, and other hazards.

The County discourages all residents and visitors from traveling unless absolutely necessary and strongly encourages sheltering-in-place if possible.

Flooding has prompted an evacuation warning for the communities of Oak Creek and Ft. Independence. A temporary evacuation point has been set up at the Owens Valley School District Multi-Purpose Room, 202 S. Clay St., Independence. The Lone Pine-Paiute Shoshone Tribe has established an evacuation point at the gymnasium. A Red Cross trailer will be positioned at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in the event southern Mono residents are evacuated.

The community of Paradise is advised to shelter in place. Lower Rock Creek Road has been closed due to flooding. Currently, there is no way in or out of the Paradise community.

U.S. 395 remains closed at this time from Pearsonville to Bishop in Inyo County and from the Mesa to 1.5 miles north of the junction with State Route 203 in Mono County. The CHP reported at 7:07 a.m. that 2-3 feet of water

was running over the highway between Lone Pine and Olancho. The National Weather Service reported that other locations expected to experience flooding are Bishop, Millpond Campground, Pleasant Valley Campground, Browns Town Campground, the Mesa, Round Valley, Dixon Lane-Meadow Creek, and West Bishop.

Sandbags are available at the Bishop, Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, and Olancho-Cartago volunteer fire departments. Members of the Independence Volunteer Fire Department will be at the fire station today until 4 p.m. today to assist anyone needing sandbags.

An avalanche evacuation warning has issued for the community of Aspendell and the public is urged to avoid the area. Residents were encouraged to evacuate prior to the storm arriving on Thursday. The Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center has issued an Avalanche Warning through 7 a.m. Saturday for all Eastern Sierra slopes from Virginia Lakes to Bishop Creek. The avalanche danger is categorized as high and could possibly be elevated to extreme today. Recreation is not recommended. For more information, visit www.esavalanche.org or www.avalanche.org

A National Weather Service (NWS) Flood Warning will remain in effect for lower-elevation areas through 7 p.m. tonight. A Flood Advisory will remain in effect through Sunday morning.

The County of Inyo has closed the Lone Pine Airport and Independence Airport, where water is running across the runway. Bishop Airport remains open at this time and flights are landing. The Lone Pine Landfill is fully closed, and the Bishop Landfill has been closed to the public.

Schools in the Bishop area have begun loading students onto buses to get them home.

In Independence, the Clerk-Recorder, Auditor-Controller, and Health & Human Services offices are closed. Other departments are minimally staffed. Independence residents are discouraged from visiting the Independence campus altogether during the current weather event.

Multiple roads from north of Bishop to south of Olancho have been closed. See the Caltrans QuickMap for more information: <https://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/>.

Southern California Edison customers may report outages at 1-800-611-1911, <https://www.sce.com/outage-center/report-an-outage> or through the SCE Outages app.

Current incident information as well as links to key resources can be found at the Office of Emergency Service's new website, <https://ready.inyocounty.us>. Incident managers will be posting regular updates on the status of the weather event and key actions/activities including road conditions (with a list of County Road closures), sheltering, and other details to this site.

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.

Remember: Turn Around, Don't Drown! According to the NWS, each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm related hazard.

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