

Emergency Storm Preparation

“Failure to plan is planning to fail.”
- Ben Franklin



www.cityofsantacruz.com/emergencystormpreparation

November 16, 2015

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Preparations

Before the storm

Store supplies at work, home, and car in handy locations

- ◆ First aid kit and essential medicines.
- ◆ Food and water (packaged, dried, canned, non-cook, baby food and special diet food).
- ◆ Non-electric can opener.
- ◆ Battery operated portable radio, flashlights, and spare batteries (stored in watertight plastic bag).
- ◆ Keep your car fueled—if electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate.
- ◆ Purchase sandbags while supplies are plenty.
- ◆ Keep plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber and other emergency building materials handy for waterproofing.
- ◆ Cash and credit cards.
- ◆ Charge cell phones and computer batteries and back-up batteries.
- ◆ Keep wrenches/tools handy to shut off gas and water.
- ◆ Sturdy shoes.
- ◆ Know safe routes from your home or office to high, safe ground.
- ◆ Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity, and water.
- ◆ Winterize your house, barn, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment.
- ◆ Install storm shutters, doors and windows.
- ◆ Clear roof and rain gutters.
- ◆ Repair roof leaks.
- ◆ Be sure that all household hazardous materials are stored indoors.
- ◆ Collect leaves and debris, from your yard and your driveway, so that they won't get washed or blown into the street gutters and storm drains.
- ◆ Secure garbage can lids. Be sure that recyclable items are inside the recycling bins. Loose debris and litter are often blown into the street and end up clogging gutters and polluting our waterways.
- ◆ If you are doing any construction work or remodeling at your home, be sure that bags of cement and plaster, loose materials, and debris are stored inside or covered properly. Otherwise, rain and wind can carry these materials into the street or storm drains.
- ◆ Don't apply pesticides or herbicides before it rains. Rain can carry these toxic chemicals into our streets and storm drains.



Develop emergency communication plan before the storm

- ◆ In case family members are separated from one another during floods or flash floods (a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), have a plan for getting back together.
- ◆ Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the “family contact.” After a disaster, it’s often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.
- ◆ Make sure that all family members know what to do after a flood or flash flood.
- ◆ Teach children how and when to call 911, police, fire department, and which radio station to access for emergency information. (See Warning section below.)
- ◆ Know ahead of time what you can do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.
- ◆ If you think you might want to volunteer in case of a disaster, now is the time to let voluntary organizations or the emergency services office know — beforehand.

Warnings

Information on coming winter storms and the threat of flooding will be issued by the National Weather Service and the County of Santa Cruz Emergency Operations Center. These warnings will come in the form of announcements on KSCO - AM 1080 (the local Emergency Broadcast Station), NOAA Weather Radio (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>), NOAA Weather Wire Service (www.nws.noaa.gov/nwws/), the National Weather Service (www.weather.gov), and other news media outlets.

For those who have registered their cell phones, evacuation orders will be issued via automated notification system by Santa Cruz Regional 911. To register your cell phone for important notifications in times of emergency, go to this website: <http://www.scr911.org/>. You may also subscribe to get community alerts and notifications from the Santa Cruz Police Department at <http://local.nixle.com/register/>.

The City of Santa Cruz will also post warnings on our website (www.cityofsantacruz.com), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/CityofSantaCruz) and Twitter (@CityofSantaCruz). Be sure to stay alert.

When you hear this...

It means...

“winter storm watch”
“winter storm warning”
“winter weather advisory”

“frost/freeze warning”

“flash flood watch” or
“flood watch”
“flash flood warning”

“flood warning”

Be alert, a storm is likely.
Take action, the storm is in or entering the area.
Winter conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists.
Below freezing temperatures are expected and may cause damage to plants, crops, or fruit trees.
Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate at a moment’s notice.
A flash flood is imminent — act quickly to save yourself because you may have only seconds.
Flooding has been reported or is imminent — take necessary precautions at once.

Sandbag Procedure

The City urges citizens to obtain sandbags in advance of predicted storms.

Free sandbags are available starting November 1 to all those City of Santa Cruz citizens in need.

1) Empty sandbags may be picked up at either location below:

Fire Administration Office
230 Walnut Ave.

Monday - Thursday
8 am - 12 pm, 1- 4 pm

City of Santa Cruz Corporate Yard
1125 River St. Office 6A

Monday - Friday
8 am - 12 pm, 1- 4 pm



2) Citizens may then fill the bags with free sand located at:

Harvey West Park (at the entrance to the Parks Yard)
326 Evergreen St.

Please be prepared with shovel to fill the bags with sand.

Please check our website for updates: www.cityofsantacruz.com/emergencystormpreparation.

Local sandbag vendors and information on filling, stacking and placing sandbags, is available on our website: www.cityofsantacruz.com/emergencystormpreparation.

Limits of Service

- ◆ In order to ensure that materials will be available to all those City of Santa Cruz citizens in need, there will be a limit of ten (10) sandbags per household, organization or business.

Evacuation

Plan and practice an evacuation route

- ◆ Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter for a copy of the community flood evacuation plan. *See the phone number listings on page 6 of this booklet.*
- ◆ This plan should include information on the safest routes to shelters. Individuals living in flash flood areas should have several alternative routes.

During an evacuation

- ◆ Evacuation is much simpler and safer before flood waters become too deep for ordinary vehicles to drive through.
- ◆ Listen to a battery-operated radio for evacuation instructions.
- ◆ Leave early enough to avoid being marooned by flooded roads.

During a Flood

- ◆ Use phones *only* for family emergency needs or to report dangerous conditions.
- ◆ Note that in the event of power outage, car chargers may be the only way to charge cell phones.
- ◆ Avoid low-lying areas subject to sudden flooding, such as underpasses.
- ◆ Avoid the ocean and beaches.
- ◆ Do not try to walk across running water more than 6 inches deep.
Even 6 inches of rapidly running water can sweep you off your feet.
- ◆ Do not “sightsee” in flooded areas.
- ◆ Do not try to enter areas blocked off by local authorities.
- ◆ Avoid unnecessary trips. If you must travel during the storm, dress in warm loose layers of clothing.
- ◆ Advise others of your destination.
- ◆ Use the internet and local radio or TV stations for emergency information and instructions from local authorities.



If indoors

- ◆ Get your pre-assembled emergency supplies.
- ◆ If told to leave, do so immediately.

If outdoors

- ◆ Return to higher ground and stay there.
- ◆ Avoid walking through any floodwaters.

If in a car

- ◆ If you come to a flooded area, turn around and go another way.
- ◆ **Do not drive into flooded areas.** If your car stalls, abandon it *immediately* and return to higher ground. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

During a flood watch

- ◆ Listen to battery-operated radio or internet for the latest storm information.
- ◆ Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.
- ◆ Bring in outdoor belongings, such as patio furniture.
- ◆ Move valuable household possessions to upper floors or to safe ground if time permits.
- ◆ If you are instructed to do so by local authorities, turn off all utilities at the main switch and close the main gas valve.
- ◆ Provide safe shelter for outdoor pets.
- ◆ **Be prepared to evacuate.**

During any storm or emergency

- ◆ Monitor your local radio and/or TV station for information and emergency instructions.
- ◆ Have your emergency survival kit ready to go if told to evacuate.
- ◆ If you go outside for any reason, dress for the season and expected conditions:
 - ◆ Outer garments should be tightly woven and water-repellent.
 - ◆ Wear sturdy, waterproof boots in flooding conditions.
- ◆ If advised to evacuate, tell others where you are going, then leave immediately, following routes designated by local officials.

After the Storm or Flood

Flood dangers do not end when the water begins to recede.

Entering the building

- ◆ **When entering buildings, use extreme caution.**
- ◆ Following an evacuation, don't return home until authorities indicate it is safe to do so.
- ◆ Use flashlights — *not* lanterns, matches or candles — to examine buildings.
- ◆ Stay out of buildings if flood waters remain around the building.
- ◆ Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage.
- ◆ Examine walls, floors, doors, and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
- ◆ Remaining flood waters may be contaminated from broken sewer lines or other sources
- ◆ Wear sturdy work boots and gloves
- ◆ Use a stick to poke through debris.
- ◆ Watch for loose plaster and ceilings that could fall.
- ◆ Take pictures of the damage — both to the house and its contents for insurance claims.
- ◆ Look for:
 - ◆ Fire hazards
 - ◆ Flooded electrical circuits
 - ◆ Flammable or explosive materials
 - ◆ Broken or leaking gas lines
 - ◆ Submerged furnaces or electrical appliances
- ◆ Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.

Food and water

- ◆ Throw out foods that have come in contact with flood waters.
- ◆ Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by flood waters.
- ◆ Follow directions from local officials regarding the safety of drinking water. If in doubt, boil or purify water before drinking. Have wells pumped out and the water tested before drinking.

Inspecting utilities in a damaged home

- ◆ **Do not turn gas back on by yourself.** If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional. Call and wait for utility crews. *See phone numbers page 6.*
- ◆ Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noises, open a window and quickly leave the building. Call the gas company from a neighbor's home.
- ◆ Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas. If electrical equipment or appliances have been in contact with water, have them checked before use.
- ◆ **Do not turn electricity back on if:**
 - ◆ You smell gas — electrical sparks can ignite gas vapors.
 - ◆ Parts of your electrical system have been flooded (i.e., circuit breaker boxes, outlets, wires).
- ◆ Do not handle electric equipment in wet areas.
- ◆ Look for electrical system damage. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.
- ◆ If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, call an electrician for advice.
- ◆ Avoid downed power lines and broken gas lines — report them immediately to the electric or gas company, police or fire department.
- ◆ Check for sewer and water line damage. If you suspect sewer lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and call a plumber. If water pipes are damaged, contact the water department and avoid drinking water from the tap. You can obtain safe water by melting ice cubes made before water was contaminated.
- ◆ Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are health hazards.

Phone Numbers

Threat to life and property..... 911

Street flooding emergency.....	420-5530 or 420-5160 during business hours
Trees down on public property such as streets, parks.....	420-5270 business hours, 911 after hours
Disabled access to sandbags	420-5530 or 420-5160 during business hours
American Red Cross	462-2881
Pacific Gas & Electric	800-743-5000 (English) 800-660-6789 (Spanish)
Water system emergency	420-5220; after hours 429-7525
Sewer system emergency.....	420-6036
Telephone Company (repair calls)....	611
Volunteer CitySERVE Program.....	420-5403 during business hours
Santa Cruz County (general)	454-2210
Santa Cruz County (disaster).....	454-2188

Volunteers

- ◆ If you are already a volunteer, report to location previously assigned.
- ◆ If volunteers are needed for labor-intensive work like sandbagging, public announcements will be made.
- ◆ Check on neighbors, especially any who might need help.
- ◆ Beware of overexertion and exhaustion. Pace yourself after any disaster.
- ◆ Help neighbors who may require special assistance: infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- ◆ Avoid disaster areas — you could hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and you may be in danger.
- ◆ Stay tuned to internet, radio or television for information and instructions from local authorities.

