



JOINT NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SBC Gap and Tea Fire 08-27
December 24, 2008
TIME: 11:00 AM

News Media Contact:

Nicole Koon, Santa Barbara County Public Information Officer, (805) 884-8083
Nina Johnson, Public Information Officer, City of Santa Barbara, (805) 564-5307
Kirsten Deshler, Public Information Officer, City of Goleta, (805) 455-9995

Flash Flood Watch Issued for Santa Barbara County

Sycamore Canyon, Gap, and Tea Fire Area Residents Urged to Take Precautionary Steps

The National Weather Service today has issued a Flash Flood Watch for the Santa Barbara area, including the Tea Fire Burn Area and the Sycamore Creek area below the burn area.

Residents who are living within the burn area or immediately below it are reminded that they need to be prepared in the event of a flood emergency. Residents should have emergency plans in place and remain ready to evacuate should they be ordered.

City and County officials are closely monitoring the incoming storm and are activating initial response plans in anticipation of the potential flooding or debris flows that might occur.

To help the public understand what they are hearing when a weather-related emergency message is sent over television and radio stations, the NWS offers the following terms and explanations:

- **Flash Flood Watch**—A flash flood **watch** is used when the risk of flooding and/or debris flows near recent burn areas has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. A flash flood watch is normally issued about six (6) hours to 24 hours in advance of an event.
- **Flash Flood Warning**—A flash flood **warning** is issued when flash flooding and/or debris flows near recent burn areas is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property. People should move to higher ground or shelter in place if safe to do so during a flash flood warning. A flash flood warning is issued based on radar rainfall estimates, rain gauge data, and ground truth reports prior to or during the heavy rain event. Lead times can vary from minutes to more than one hour.

A Flash Flood Watch and a Flash Flood Warning are the two most important messages issued by the NWS.

In addition, the NWS may issue:

- **Urban and Small Stream Flood Advisory**—An urban and small stream flood **advisory** is issued when minor flooding is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. An advisory is used for conditions that are more of a *nuisance*, such as ponding of water on low-lying fields, under bridge overpasses and city streets, and do not threaten life or property.

-more-

Residents should pay attention to local National Weather Service (NWS) information, which provides Flash Flood Watches and Warnings both on the NOAA Weather radio, and on the NWS website at www.weather.gov/losangeles.

Sand bags are available for residents at the sand bag station located at the City of Santa Barbara's Corporate Annex Yard at **401 E. Yanonali Street**.

The station will be open from 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 24, closed on December 25, open from 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Friday, December 26, and closed on the weekend. There is no limit on the number of sand bags residents may take. Residents should be prepared to fill sand bags and bring gloves.

Additional sand bags also are available at **County Fire Station 14, 320 Los Carneros in Goleta** and at the **Montecito Fire Protection stations in Montecito**.

In the event of a large emergency or disaster, the County and the cities will work with area news organizations to distribute emergency public information. The County's "Stations of Choice" for emergency news currently include the following AM stations—KTMS-990; KZSB-1290; KUHL-1410; KINF-1440, plus the San Marcos Pass Radio Station 1040—and the following FM stations—KCSB-91.9; KSYV-96.7; KTYD-99.9; KSBL-101.7 and KRAZ-105.9. In addition, the Spanish language FM stations, KSPE-94.5 and KIST-107.7 are also designated "Stations of Choice" in the cooperative agreement with the County.

For more information regarding the emergency preparedness, go online to www.CountyofSB.org, or the cities' websites at www.santabarbaraca.gov. For emergency preparedness tips go to www.Ready.gov.

###