

Monterey County Health Department Preparedness Minute

Updated October 2015

Preparing for Post Fire Flooding

The fires may be out, but more damage is still possible.

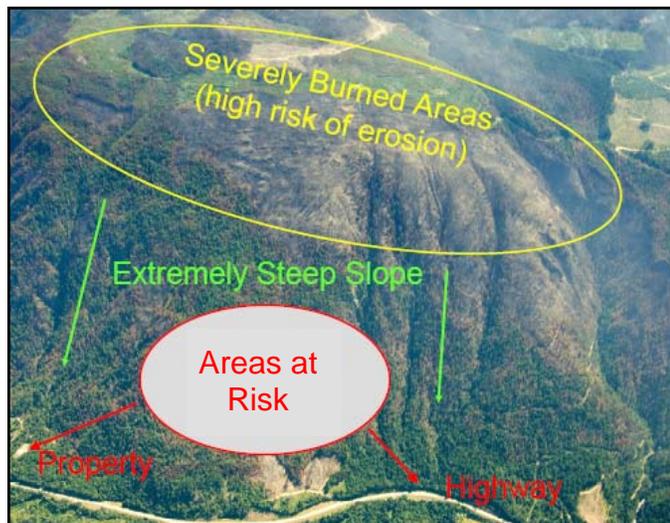


Photo: British Columbia Ministry of Forest and Range

This summer's fires have removed the vegetation that acts as a natural rainfall sponge allowing rainfall to run off much more rapidly. In addition, the fires have dried out the soil making it difficult for the soil to absorb water. These factors combined with the area's steep slopes and intense rainfall; means there is an increase risk of flash flooding.

Areas downstream of the burned areas, particularly along streams, are also subject to increased flooding. Until the burned area recovers, nothing will stop the waters from coming down the canyons. While efforts are being taken to reduce the risks to life and property downstream of the fire, residents in the area should take their own steps to protect themselves and their property.

What can you do?

Be Aware

- ✘ Know your community flood risk.
- ✘ Be alert to the possibility of flooding if it rains upstream.
- ✘ Listen to local radio stations for public safety bulletins.
- ✘ Monitor a weather radio for real time weather conditions.
- ✘ Know if your community has a flood warning system and how the alert is given.



Reduce Possible Damage

- ✘ Clear dirt and debris from culverts and storm drains.
- ✘ Raise your furnace, water heater and electric panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- ✘ Remove floatable debris from streambeds above culverts on property.
- ✘ Dispose of refuse only in designated sites.



The purpose of this short publication is to inform Monterey County staff about preparedness issues ranging from emerging communicable diseases to personal preparedness. If there is a specific topic you or your staff are interested in please contact the Preparedness Program at klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us.

During a Flood

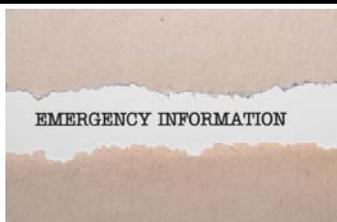
- ✓ Evacuations may be necessary. You may only have seconds to escape. Act quickly.
- ✓ Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains.
- ✓ Do not drive or walk through flood waters, even water six inches deep can knock you off your feet.
- ✓ Stay away from downed power lines and electrical wires.
- ✓ Watch out for lost pets and displaced wild animals.



Barricades are put up for your protection. Turn around and go another way.

After the Flood

- ✓ Do not return to your property until it has been declared safe for reentry.
- ✓ Clean your property's culverts and storm drains of flood debris.
- ✓ Know that major flood events can alter stream channels, which may change the severity of future flood events and cause flooding in different areas.
- ✓ Notify proper authority of road damage and plugged culverts on public roads.
- ✓ Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- ✓ Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- ✓ Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car



Know Your Flood Terms

Flood Watch: Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flash Flood Watch: Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.

Flood Warning: Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Flash Flood Warning: A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency www.fema.gov



This issue of *Preparedness Minute* is brought to you by the Monterey County Health Department's Preparedness Program. For more information Contact:

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