

EVACUATIONS FAQs:

Why do I have to evacuate every time it rains?

- Evacuation orders may not be issued every time it rains. Each incident is analyzed individually by the Foothills Incident Unified Command, which comprises incident commanders representing LA County Sheriff's, Fire and Public Works Departments. Your safety and the safety of those that serve your community are of highest importance. The recent Station Fire was the 10th largest in California's history and has created areas prone to mudflow during a major storm event. The County Flood Control District has developed comprehensive facilities such as debris basins to mitigate the effects of storms. However, in severe storm events, mudflow may still directly impact your home or cause your street to be inaccessible to emergency vehicles. In those situations, an evacuation order will be issued to ensure your safety and the safety of first responders. We strongly urge you to heed each order and evacuate when asked to do so.

How do you determine if debris flows may happen?

- Public Works utilizes the forecast and warnings provided by the National Weather Service and storm models developed by meteorologists then performs analyses based on many factors including, but not limited to, quantity and intensity of rainfall predicted, thunderstorm potential, current soil saturation due to previous rain events, and operational status and remaining capacity of debris basins to determine possible extent of debris flows into homes and on streets.

Who is responsible for issuing evacuation orders?

- The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will issue evacuation orders once evacuations have been recommended by the Unified Command.

Why do I have to evacuate but my neighbors don't?

- Each storm event is analyzed independently and compared to the engineering analysis performed by Public Works. Based on the science and engineering, a mudflow forecast is developed and properties are identified to be evacuated. You may be asked to evacuate while your neighbors are not because for the particular storm event, your property was identified as possibly being at risk.

Do I have to evacuate if I am told to do so?

- While we request that you evacuate, you may opt to refuse; however, evacuations are ordered with the safety of the resident and the first responder as our primary concern.

How are evacuation order notifications issued?

- Depending upon the situation and availability of various communications systems, the Sheriff's Department will provide Alert LA (reverse 911, e-mail, text, and TTY type system) and incorporated cities may use their own similar system. Additionally, door-knocks will occur at the affected residences and evacuations are broadcast on various television, radio and Internet systems.

How long do the evacuation orders last?

- The status of evacuations is analyzed on an on-going basis. It is the goal of the Unified Command to allow residents to return to their property as soon as possible, as long as it is safe and access of cleanup and preventative Public Works heavy machinery is not blocked.

How do I find out when an evacuation order has been lifted?

- Orders for lifting evacuations are broadcast on various television, radio and Internet systems. Information about lifted evacuation orders can also be found on the Public Works CARE web-site at www.dpwcare.org.

How long can I expect the possibility of evacuation orders to go on for?

- Short term - - The status of evacuations is analyzed on an on-going basis. It is the goal of the Unified Command to allow residents to return to their property as soon as possible, as long as it is safe.
- Long term - - Due to the severity of the Station Fire, we are not expecting the watershed above your property to substantially recover for three to five years. Therefore, during the rainy season for the next several years, evacuation orders will be issued when deemed necessary

Why am I not allowed to park my vehicle on the street during rain storms?

- "No Parking During Rain Storm" restrictions have been placed on any street that has been identified as being susceptible to debris flows. This will eliminate obstructions within the street as well provide an unobstructed ability to clean and remove debris from the streets during and after rain events.

How can I obtain proof of evacuation orders for my insurance company?

- Contact your local law enforcement agency who will provide you with appropriate documentation. Please ask to speak to the on duty Watch Commander. Also, the law enforcement representative may need some time to research and provide the post evacuation order you have requested.