

New storm evacuation guidelines issued for mudslide areas

Robert J. Lopez, Los Angeles Times, 2-26-10

As Los Angeles County braces for another storm, new evacuation protocols have been established for foothill neighborhoods threatened by mudslides, officials said Thursday.

Color codes will be used to designate danger levels, and residents will now have to sign liability forms if they refuse to heed evacuation orders or try to return to their homes, said Nicole Nishida, spokeswoman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

The guidelines apply to areas of La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta and Acton that were affected by the Station fire in August, officials said.

When the level is green, residents will be advised to monitor weather conditions. A yellow level indicates mandatory evacuations. Residents who evacuate in yellow conditions will be allowed to return to their homes before the order is lifted but will have to sign liability waivers, Nishida said.

Under a red level, residents who leave their homes will not be allowed to return until the evacuation warning is lifted.

Residents who refuse to heed evacuation orders will also have to sign waivers, according to Nishida.

Information on the new guidelines are posted on the website of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

The storm is expected to move into Southern California late Friday with an intense period of rain likely early Saturday, according to the National Weather Service.