



Council Memorandum

September 3, 2015

TO: City Council
FROM: Department Heads
VIA: Katie Lichtig, City Manager
SUBJECT: Storm Preparedness Activities

Preparing for Winter Weather is an all-hands activity at the City. Many departments are working now to prepare the City in the event currently predicted heavy winter storms become a reality. Below, each department has briefly identified their work and responsibilities. While this current effort is focused on storms, emergency preparations are valuable for all types of issues.

With information coming out in the press predicting heavy rainfall, Council can expect contact from their constituents, and staff departments are already fielding preliminary calls. Additional information is provided at the end of this memo that can be passed along to community members as contacts are made.

It is important to note that the City's drainage system, both piped and open creek, is not sufficiently sized to convey a 100-year storm, and flooding to varying degrees should be expected if the City receives intense storms (it is not an affordable or standard practice for municipalities to build and maintain a system that addresses a 100-year storm). Some areas may see minor flooding even in lower intensity storms. In addition, downed trees and falling limbs can occur during heavy rain storms particularly following long spells of dry weather. It is important for the community to prepare themselves and their property, particularly if they are in low lying areas.



1973 SLO & Prefumo Creek come together

The following list outlines new and ongoing actions the City is taking that support community preparedness for winter weather:

Activities Underway or Upcoming

Administration (Natural Resources Manager/City Biologist)

- Contract underway with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) for vegetation management in the creeks – assistance provided by Public Works for debris hauling
- Collaborating with Public Works on downed tree removals
- Collaborating with Public Works on creek maintenance and silt removal projects to ensure free stormwater passage
- Working with City Rangers on targeted debris jam removal and other fallen trees that are not accessible to the CCC crews

Community Development

- Updating the City's storm preparedness website
- Providing storm preparedness and flood zone outreach to properties located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) or Repetitive Loss area
- Providing information to the Downtown Association for businesses/property owners located in this flood zone to clear roofs, find flood gates, and train staff in deploying flood gates
- Review of building permit applications for compliance with the Floodplain Management Regulations
- Inspection of building construction for water resistant and flood barrier construction
- Reviewing job sites to ensure that stormwater control measures are in place and are being maintained

Information Technology (IT)

- Collecting all field handheld radios – verifying all are operational, compatible with current radio communication technology and ready for use in the event cell communications are not available
- IT has an additional 30 spare handheld radios ready to distribute to emergency responders as required
- Batteries in all mission-critical uninterruptible power supply (UPS) equipment are being tested and replaced as necessary
- Topping off fuel levels for all emergency generators

Fire

- Initiating emergency response training for all staff to be completed over the next several months, including swift water rescue, flood rescue, and sand bagging and water diversion training
- Review relevant operational plans
- Purchase additional supplies for emergency response cache
- Exercise Emergency Operations Center (EOC) set-up at Fire Station 1

Police

- Monitor Public Works and Utility radio channels should cell phones become inoperable until the Corp Yard is sufficiently staffed
- Review flood procedures and resource documents with Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) staff at Dispatch and the Emergency Communications Center
- I.D. known flood locations for patrol checks during heavy storms
- Check with the Sheriff's Office regarding the use of reverse 911 (if evacuations are needed)
- Exercise EOC set-up at Fire Station 1 with Fire
- Prepare evacuation plan for flood areas and identify potential evacuation locations
- Create a plan for road closure during flood conditions

- Create a call back plan during heavy storms to ensure adequate resources are available
- Have the Community Action Team develop a plan with Rangers to do creek checks prior to heavy storms

Public Works

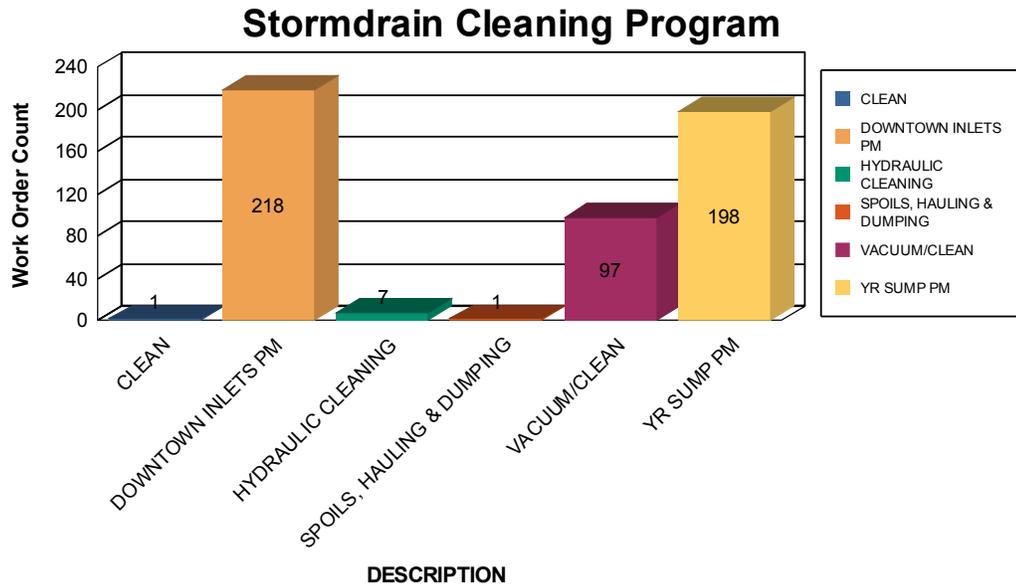
- Updating all storm response map field patrol binders
- Updating all staff home contact information for callback
- Updating the Storm Response Plan and reviewing with all staff
- Updated County Office of Emergency Services (OES) resource binder containing private company emergency contact information for additional support during emergencies, including construction equipment, contractors, and other logistic items
- Reviewing radio protocols with staff in the event cell communications are not available
- Providing field reviews for all staff of storm “hot spot” locations to familiarize them with the areas
- Reviewing and clearing all “hot spot” locations (includes all rock catchers) in preparation for wet weather, and continuing to keep them clear throughout the season
- Silt removal projects underway at Broad & Murray, Marsh & Higuera, Los Osos Valley Rd at Laguna Lake, and Hollyhock & Tank Farm
- Bank repairs underway at Toro and at Broad street
- Collaborating with Natural Resources on downed tree removals
- Preparing News Releases for public education
- Maintain and advertise that bulk sand is available at various locations for public use to fill their sandbags before predicted heavy storms (bags not provided)
- Regular testing and maintenance of back-up generators
- Briefing SLO Transit operators in the potential need for use of City buses in case of localized evacuation requirements
- Visiting all SLO Transit communications equipment, protocols and plans

Parks and Recreation

- Open Space trails, roads and trailheads will be winterized by Rangers and volunteers
- City Open Space trails will be monitored by Rangers during the winter season and closed as conditions warrant
- City Parks will be monitored by Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff during heavy rain events and will be closed as conditions warrant (i.e. dangerous conditions)
- City playing fields will be closed following heavy rains so that damage does not occur due to play – the rain hotline and City will reflect this information
- Ranger Staff will be ready and able to assist where needed with trucks, trailers, chainsaws and whatever other resources are needed
- Other Parks and Recreation staff will be available to assist should an EOC be established

Utilities

- Providing ongoing drainage inlet and pipe cleaning. Annual inlet and sump cleaning programs to remove silt and debris have a large impact on keeping the storm drain system clear and operating to the fullest design capacities. Storm water gravity mains are inspected and cleaned as required. With the annual cleaning of sumps and inlets, cleaning storm water gravity mains is minimal.



- Identifying outfall clearance needs and forwarding to Public Works or Natural Resources for clearing
- Regular testing and maintenance of back-up mobile generators for critical facilities
- Preventive maintenance of sewer collection system to reduce inflow & infiltration
- Implementation of Water Resource Recovery Facility *Winter Weather Preparedness Checklist* including assigning staff resources and ensuring equipment is ready for increased flows

Talking Points for Community Preparedness

- The information outlined above along with other Winter Weather Preparedness tips and information on sand for sandbags is available at www.slocity.org/WinterWeather:

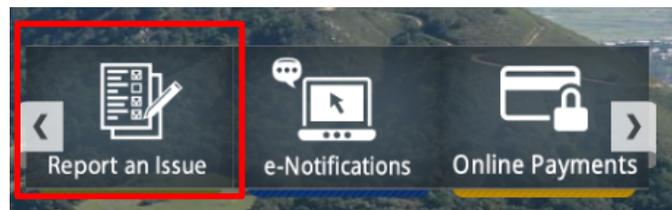


- Residents, tenants and business owners should look around their property and clear drain inlets, downspouts, check drainage ways and remove trash, debris, downed trees and

limbs from flow areas, and trim back excessive vegetation. They can contact Public Works or Natural Resources with questions on vegetation.

Note: The City owns very little of the creek system. While the Municipal Code provides for us to take action in an emergency, the property owner is responsible for ongoing maintenance of their own property.

- If a property is in a flood plain or flooded in the past, get sandbags from local vendors and store them at the property well in advance of needing them. Vendors may run short if there is a major event. Those with special needs should arrange for assistance in advance, so they have support during storms.
- If anyone see blockages or other problems in the streets, contact the City Corporation Yard at 781-7220 or use the City's "Report an Issue" on the City's website homepage (good for Council and staff too).



Both of these communication methods will provide more rapid response than emailing department heads or other staff, as the problems are immediately entered into the work order system used to dispatch the crews.

Staff is developing a concise version of this information to be distributed as a press release in the near future. Thank you for YOUR help in preparing the City for wet weather.

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