Rosamond Community Services District

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Preparing for the Next Flood

El Niño is a hot topic this year. This climate pattern lasts about nine to twelve months and occurs every two to seven years, with no regularity or predictable cycle. It results in colder, wetter winters in the southwestern United States. As residents of the Mojave Desert, this means an increased potential for flooding.

Flooding ranks among the most frequent and destructive natural hazards affecting California residents. In the desert, we know that heavy rainfall can quickly cause flooding on streets and in open areas. This can be accompanied by flash floods and debris flows, especially in the mountains and canyons. In 2015, another El Niño year, nearly 200 motorists were buried in up to six feet of mud and debris on a two-mile stretch of Highway 58 after a storm dropped 1.891 inches of rain in 30 minutes.

RCSD participates in local and regional emergency and natural hazard planning and mitigation. Most recently, the public works crew has been repairing and improving manholes that allowed floodwater to enter the sewer system during the last significant rainfall.

While the potential for danger, destruction, and tragedy is real, there are simple things you can do to prepare for the heavy rainfall and potential flood event:

- Talk with your household about where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate.
- Plan more than one route in case roads become flooded or inaccessible.
- Establish a way for family members to communicate if you are separated.
- Make arrangements for children, older adults, people with disabilities, and anyone who may need additional assistance.
- Include pets in your emergency plan.
- Make sure everyone in your household knows where emergency supplies are kept.
- If your property is prone to flooding, consider keeping sandbags and other appropriate flood-fighting materials available.
- Know how to safely shut off water, gas, and electricity to your home if necessary.
- Monitor weather forecasts and local emergency information.
- Keep your phone charged when severe weather is expected.
- Know which sources to trust for emergency information, such as NOAA and Kern County.
- Follow instructions from local emergency officials.
- Don't wait for conditions to become dangerous before taking action.

Remember, flood water can be deeper and faster than it appears. Never drive through flood water. Always turn around and follow local emergency officials.

Water Supply Security

The word security usually conjures up images of armed guards protecting something precious. When it comes to water supply security, it is more about reliability than protection, though water is something precious, especially here in the desert.

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Every drop of water that flows through RCSD pipes and into your home has to come from somewhere. Many agencies rely on sources such as reservoirs and the State Water Project (the aqueduct), both of which can experience periods of low availability. RCSD's primary source of water is groundwater.

Groundwater sounds simple enough, but it is actually a hot topic. Building a secure water supply primarily from groundwater was neither small nor easy. Groundwater in the Antelope Valley is heavily regulated, and with good reason. For many decades, water users in the Antelope Valley pumped as much water as they wanted, with no thought for the future. The result was more water being pumped out of the ground than was being naturally replaced. This is called overdraft.

The courts stepped in to regulate groundwater use, establishing water rights and pumping limits in a process known as adjudication. This process took more than ten years to complete. The RCSD knew that pumping limits were coming and began preparing in advance. The team purchased properties for their water rights and constructed the Rosamond Water Reclamation Plant, which treats wastewater and reintroduces it into the aquifer. While these sound simple, both are actually huge undertakings that required foresight and significant investment in RCSD's future.

The result of all this work and investment is a secure water supply from groundwater that actually helps recharge the groundwater, not just take from it. That doesn't mean we can take our water supply for granted. It still needs to be cared for, appreciated, and maintained. Each RCSD customer remains responsible for using water wisely and conserving whenever possible. These small actions today will ensure there is enough water for future growth in Rosamond, and that is real water supply security.

RCSD: International Leaders in Responsible Water Use

The RCSD Water Reclamation Plant is not just an essential part of our water supply security; it's also an example of innovative water use and conservation. The RCSD team has been invited to present at professional conferences about the plant's construction and operation.

One of these presentations caught the interest of a water agency from Mexico, which recently sent a delegation to tour the water reclamation plant to better understand how it was built, how our team runs the plant, and its real-world results. Our Water Reclamation Plant and the team behind it are truly world-class!

Fighting Holiday FOG

As families and friends gather together and enjoy cooking and eating delicious meals, remember to keep Fats, Oils, and Grease, or FOG, out of our drains and sewers. FOG enters our sewer pipes as a liquid but solidifies as it cools. These solid FOG logs cause major backups and clogs in our sewer system, requiring extra cleaning to clear them and more frequent maintenance. This means more man-hours invested in maintenance and higher operational costs. Plus, if sewage lines get completely backed up, all that sewage begins flowing back to where it came from. That's a mess no one wants to deal with. Do your part to help keep our sewers flowing and our rates down by putting all FOG where it belongs: in the trash.