



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Santa Ana Winds Preparedness -

SANTA BARBARA, Ca. December 1, 2011 – The Santa Barbara County area is currently experiencing strong Santa Ana Winds. According to the National Weather Service (NWS), the strongest winds of the season began increasing Wednesday, are expected to peak today and then remain gusty on Friday and possibly into Saturday.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBC FD) is continuing to monitor the situation. The need for increased staffing levels is evaluated each day based on briefings by the NWS. SBC FD has been in contact with county officials and operational area fire departments to determine county wide preparedness and to ensure a coordinated response.

Wednesday evening, SBC FD responded to numerous calls for emergency service as a result of the strong winds. The wind related calls included power lines down, transformer fires, roadways blocked, spot fires, and trees down. None of these incidents however were considered serious.

All SBC FD engines are equipped with a device for the detection live power lines. The public is encouraged to treat every downed power line as energized. Additionally, all engines are also equipped with chain saws for emergency debris removal.

The NWS is reporting the strong high pressure to continue to build, setting the stage for potentially strong Santa Ana winds to continue across southern California from today through Friday, and possibly into Saturday. Potential impacts include; downed trees and power lines, rapid fire growth, damage to unsecured objects, dangerous driving conditions for high profile vehicles, and blowing dust with reduce visibility. In addition, very low humidity readings in the teens and single digits are likely during this event resulting in a heightened fire danger.

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