

# GIFFORD / MADRE BURN SCARS RESIDENT INFORMATION



2025

## Are You At Risk?

If you can look uphill from where you are and see a burnt-out area, you are at risk. However, you may be at risk even if you can not see a burnt-out area. Locations downhill and downstream from burned areas are very susceptible to flash flooding and debris flows, especially near steep terrain. Rainfall that would normally be absorbed will run off extremely quickly after a wildfire, as burned soil can be as water-repellant as pavement.

## How Can You Prepare?

- Determine specific risks on your property and mitigate as able, such as clearing culverts and diverting water
- Have an evacuation route planned that is least likely to be impacted by flash flooding / debris flows
- Make an emergency supply kit and go bag
- Stay informed before and during any potential event
- Be alert during storms
- Leave before the storm starts if you feel unsafe
- Visit [ReadySLO.org/storms](https://ReadySLO.org/storms) for more tips

## Public Information

Information regarding significant storms affecting SLO County will be provided on social media.

Information on storms with debris flow potential will be sent via [AlertSLO.org](https://AlertSLO.org).

NWS will issue Wireless Emergency Alerts for severe thunderstorms and flash flood warnings.

[ReadySLO.org](https://ReadySLO.org) also has storm preparedness information.

### Follow us:

**Facebook:** [SLOCountyOES](https://www.facebook.com/SLOCountyOES)

**X:** [slocountyoes](https://twitter.com/slocountyoes)

**Instagram:** [countyoofslooes](https://www.instagram.com/countyoofslooes)



## Protective Actions

The County does not plan to issue protective actions - Evacuation Warning, Evacuation Order or Shelter-in-Place - in the Gifford or Madre Burn Scar areas during normal winter storms. Protective Actions will only be issued in the event of severe or life threatening storms.

However, even if protective actions are not issued, residents are encouraged to leave BEFORE the rain begins if weather forecast or conditions make them uncomfortable.

### Safety Tips

- Debris flow forecasting / location is very hard to predict. In every storm, expect uncertainty.
- Leave before the storm starts if you feel unsafe.
- Once the rain starts, avoid travel unless absolutely necessary.
- If a debris flow catches you by surprise, your best hope of surviving is to get higher than the flow - get to the top story of your home, on a roof, up a tree.
- Know the warning signs that a debris flow is about to arrive. Listen and watch for rushing water, mud, unusual sounds (cracking, breaking, roaring).
- Debris flow risk is highest in the first two years after a fire.

### Thresholds

Debris flow thresholds for the Gifford Burn Scar are:

.35" or greater in 15 minutes  
.50" or greater in 30 minutes  
.70" or greater in 60 minutes

### NOTIFICATIONS

Communications with residents in the burn scare area will be made via [AlertSLO.org](https://AlertSLO.org).

Please visit [AlertSLO.org](https://AlertSLO.org) to sign up for notifications. Select group, "Gifford and Madre Fire Burn Scar Info."

Messages will be sent via text and email.