

WEATHER WATCHES AND WARNINGS:

BLIZZARD WARNING:

Blizzard Warning in effect from 10am Thursday to 10pm Saturday for Siskiyou County. This will be a major storm and disruptions for travelers will occur along portions of I-5, US 97, and CA 89 at higher elevations.

Blizzard Warning in effect from 4am Friday through 4am Saturday for Plumas County, Lassen County, Sierra County including Lassen Park through the west slope of the northern Sierra Nevada.

Blizzard Warning in effect from midnight Thursday night through 4am Saturday for the Shasta County and Burney Basin to Northern Lake County; mountains of Shasta County and interior coast range.

Blizzard Warning in effect from 4am Friday to 10am Saturday for the Greater Lake Tahoe Area and Mono County.

Blizzard Warning in effect from 10am Friday to 10am Saturday for the Eastern Sierra Slopes and White Mountains of Inyo County.

WINTER STORM WARNINGS:

Winter Storm Warning in effect from 6pm Thursday to 10am Saturday for the Sierra Nevada from Yosemite Park to the Kern County Line, Kings Canyon and Tulare County Mountains.

WINTER STORM WATCH:

Winter Storm Watch in effect from Friday afternoon through late Friday night for the Surprise Valley of Modoc County.

Winter Storm Watch in effect above 3,000 feet from Friday evening through late Saturday night for the North Coast Interior, upper Trinity River.

HIGH WIND WARNING:

High Wind Warning in effect from 4am to 2pm Friday afternoon for the Surprise Valley of Modoc County.

High Wind Warning in effect from 10am Thursday to 4pm Friday for Central Siskiyou County including the cities of Yreka and Weed.

High Wind Warning in effect from noon Thursday to 4pm Friday for the Sonoma, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo coasts, and the north Bay hills.

High Wind Warning in effect from 4pm Thursday to 4pm Friday for the entire San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas.

High Wind Warning in effect from 10pm Thursday to 4pm Friday for the Sacramento Valley, surrounding foothills and Lake County.

HIGH WIND WATCH:

High Wind Watch in effect from Friday morning through late Friday night for San Luis Obispo County Central Coast and interior valleys, Santa Barbara County Central Coast and the Santa Ynez Valley.

High Wind Watch in effect from Friday morning through Friday evening for the San Joaquin Valley, Sierra foothills, and Kern County mountains and desert.

COASTAL FLOOD WATCH:

Coastal Flood Watch remains in effect from this afternoon through Sunday morning for San Francisco-coastal north bay, including Point Reyes National Seashore, San Francisco peninsula coast, Monterey Bay, northern Salinas Valley, Hollister Valley, and Carmel Valley, Big Sur Coast.

HIGH SURF WARNING:

High Surf Warning in effect from 10 pm Friday to 4 pm Saturday for the Redwood Coast.

High Surf Warning in effect from midnight Friday to 4 pm Saturday for the Mendocino Coast.

WEATHER OF CONCERN:

A powerful arctic low pressure system will send a series of storms into California by the end of the week, and through the weekend. A prolonged period of heavy rain in the valleys and heavy snow in the mountains is expected along with threatening high winds. With the continued steady, and occasionally heavy rain, the potential for localized flooding exists throughout the State, especially in coastal, urban, and burn areas. Rain totals for the 4 to 5 day storm period may reach 2 to 4 inches in valley areas and as much as 8 to 10 inches in the mountains.

Blizzard Warnings are likely for higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada due to heavy snowfall and extreme winds. Winds in this area are forecast to reach 100-150 mph. These storms will bring substantial rains to the burn areas and strong winds to the mountains. Given the rainfall forecast, flash flood watches for the burn areas are likely with the possibility for upgraded warnings during this period. Highlights to illustrate coming days include:

- Blizzards and highway closures very likely with gusts over 100 mph in the Sierra.
- Upwards of 8 to 10 feet of snow at and above 7,000 feet.
- Sacramento/Delta area winds gusting to 50 mph through the day Friday; stronger in the north valley and at the coast.

- Flash flood prone rivers statewide experiencing quick rises Thursday night through Sunday.
- Heavy rain for southern California, with some mountain ranges picking up to 10 inches of rain through this weekend.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF WEATHER OUTLOOKS:

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND CENTRAL COASTAL AREAS:

Eureka Weather: Rain will spread throughout the entire area by Thursday afternoon as the front moves through the area quickly by Thursday night, leaving about 1 to 2 inches of rain. The rain should turn to showers briefly behind the front Thursday night, when snow levels are expected to lower from above 5000 feet to 4500 feet. A more impressive cold front will bring more substantial rain to the area Friday, with an additional 2 to 4 inches of rain and mountain snow above 4000 feet. The persistence of rain Thursday and Friday will lead to rises in the local rivers. The River Forecast Center is currently advertising the Eel River at Fernbridge will reach monitor stage by Saturday afternoon. Late Friday night into Saturday and will provide the best potential for low elevation snow at 2000 to 3000 feet, though snowfall accumulations should not be significant at the lower elevations. Bouts of precipitation will continue through the weekend. There may be a brief break in the wet weather on Monday, but another front will move across Northwest California mid-week.

San Francisco Weather: The big change in the pattern is now upon us, bringing heavy rain to the area today, with winds increasing to 25 to 40 mph, and gusting to 55 mph. An even more powerful system will affect the area on Friday, with rainfall in the mountains exceeding five inches or more. Strong damaging winds are likely with sustained winds at 30 to 45 mph with gusts to 60 mph. Hurricane force gusts are certainly possible above 1000 feet in the Bay Area Mountains. A High Wind Watch has been issued for today through Friday afternoon. These systems will be similar to the Dec 1995 storms, which brought very heavy rains and winds well in excess of hurricane force across the San Francisco Bay Area. The main trough will move to the coast Saturday and Sunday, bringing numerous showers across the area, with scattered thunderstorms. Hail will be likely with these storms. Next week will be unsettled, at least at the beginning of the week, with scattered showers Monday through Wednesday.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AND SOUTHERN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY:

Sacramento Weather: The first in a series of storms is forecast to impact the Sierra Nevada late Thursday through Friday morning. A second more powerful storm will move through the Sierra Nevada Mountains and southern Cascade Range Friday afternoon through Saturday morning. Snowfall amounts from 3 to 5 feet are expected over the Sierra Nevada between Thursday evening and

Saturday morning above snow levels with several more feet of snow possible at the highest elevations. Snowfall is likely to accumulate at a rate of several inches per hour at times through the warning period, with the heaviest snowfall expected Friday afternoon with the stronger second system. In addition to the heavy snowfall, strong winds are expected, with wind gusts in excess of 65 mph expected with the Thursday night system and wind gusts in excess of 100 mph possible on Friday afternoon with the second system. The combination of heavy snow and powerful winds will likely cause frequent whiteout conditions, so travel over the higher passes will be very difficult, if not impossible at times between Thursday evening and Saturday morning. The wind and snow may decrease by mid-day Saturday. A third, colder storm is expected to move over the area late Saturday into Sunday with a foot or more of additional snow possible. Snow levels will be at 4500 to 6000 feet Thursday night into Friday, with snow levels lowering from 3000 to 4500 feet on Friday night into Saturday. Snow levels for Saturday night and Sunday are forecast even lower, with levels down to 1500-2500 feet. Showery conditions will continue Monday with a brief break overnight as a weak ridge begins to build inland on the west coast. Light showers will affect Northern California again on Tuesday into Wednesday morning. During the latter half of the week a second higher amplitude ridge will induce drier weather with clearing skies.

Hanford Weather: Partly cloudy skies and mild temps are expected in most areas today. The pattern changes dramatically by Thursday, as a progression of storms is slated to bring periods of rain and snow to Central California Thursday night and continuing through the weekend. The progressive systems will move through bringing periods of heavy precipitation by Friday afternoon with the potential of 3+ inches of rain, especially over the southern Sierra foothills Friday afternoon and evening. This could pose some runoff problems for the valley and foothill areas, and should be watched for flood potential. Strong and gusty winds will also accompany the systems. In addition to south to southwest winds over the mountains and deserts, strong southeast winds will be possible in the San Joaquin Valley, especially Friday and again Saturday night or Sunday. Some lessening of the activity into Central California is seen by Sunday night or Monday next week and precipitation should begin to gradually diminish, though temps may fall considerably by Monday, bringing lower snow levels and significant snow to the foothills.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:

Los Angeles: The area will receive a significant amount of precipitation from Thursday night through Sunday, though it won't be raining that entire time. The focus period appears to be Friday night into early Saturday. South facing mountains could easily see 10 inches or more of rain through Sunday, with 4 to 8 inches of that falling during the Friday night/early Saturday time frame. Lower elevations will see considerably less rain, but a widespread 2 to 4 inches is a reasonable guess. The Thursday/Friday storm does not look strong enough to produce the rainfall rates necessary for debris flows. Thus any Flash Flood

Watches will be for Friday night and will be issued by Thursday morning. Snowfall level should fall steadily through Friday morning and then rise again starting Friday afternoon, peaking around 1 am Saturday and then falling steadily into Sunday where it looks like snow levels of near 4000 feet will be likely Sunday afternoon.

Extreme Southwestern California including Orange, San Diego, Western Riverside and Southwestern San Bernardino Counties: Moisture spreading eastward ahead of the pacific low pressure system will bring clouds and cooler weather Thursday and Friday. There will also be periods of light rain at times, with heaviest amounts falling across the San Bernardino County Mountains. Heavy rain is expected late Friday night and Saturday increasing the threat for flash flooding and debris flows. Strong winds along and ahead of the storm are likely Friday and Saturday. Snow levels, initially above 7000 feet, will lower to 4000 feet on Sunday after the cold front passes.

Southeast California: Moisture spreading eastward ahead of the pacific low pressure system will bring clouds and cooler weather Thursday and Friday. There will also be periods of light rain at times, but heavy rain will start in the San Bernardino County Mountains Friday evening and then spread south across Riverside and Orange Counties overnight before bringing heavy rain to San Diego County Saturday. Strong winds along and ahead of the storm are likely Friday and Saturday. Snow levels, initially above 7000 feet, will lower to 4000 feet on Sunday after the cold front passes. Flooding and debris flows are quite likely if the forecast rain amounts of 4-8 inches in the mountains come to fruition. 1-3 inches, locally higher, are expected in the coastal and valleys zones, with generally 1 inch over the high deserts and 1/2 inch or less in the lower deserts. Winds will buffet the area, with the strongest over the mountains, high deserts and coastal waters. A High Wind Watch might be needed for the mountains. Colder air will spill into Southern California on Saturday night with snow levels falling to 4000 feet Sunday. But yet another shortwave rippling southward in the incredibly strong northwest flow behind the trough, will tap into the leftover moisture to bring moderate to heavy showers and possible thunderstorms Sunday afternoon through Monday. Moderate to locally heavy mountain snow could generate a foot or more of accumulation to the resort levels. Waterspouts in the cold unstable airmass are also possible. A building weak ridge Monday night will bring a drier, warmer airmass back to the region Tuesday and Wednesday.