

NWS Huntsville Partners Up for Severe Weather Safety Workshops for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

By: NWS Staff

On March 29-30, NWS Huntsville partnered with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind-Huntsville (AIDB) to host their annual fully-accessible severe weather workshops for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This was in conjunction with their spring Skywarn program. Alongside American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL) and live captioning, Meteorologist **Jennifer Saari** presented on traditional topics such as an introduction to the NWS, general weather safety, and thunderstorm development.

The first class was hosted at the new AIDB satellite office in Decatur, AL. Morgan County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director Brandy Davis attended and spoke about the partnership they have with NWS Huntsville, local storm shelters, and how the Morgan EMA alert system works. Attendees spoke about the difficulty of receiving phone calls that have automated messages since they first have to go through a video relay service. Experiences and possible solutions were discussed.

Huntsville AIDB hosted the second class, where Madison County EMA director Jeff Birdwell and EMA Officer Candy Sumlin also spoke. Madison EMA answered storm shelter and tornado safety questions. Then they introduced a new weather safety preparedness project, which involved creating and distributing emergency bags with essential supplies. For this class, they included a weather radio with a strobe light and pillow shaker attachment. At the end of each class, ADRS gave a weather radio to attendees who didn't already have one.

For more resources, please visit the [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Weather Safety Information](#) page.



Meteorologist **Jennifer Saari** presents on weather safety alongside ASL interpreter and live captioning at the Decatur AIDB.



Madison County EMA Officer **Candy Sumlin** briefed participants about their new emergency preparedness project and donated two emergency bags to AIDB and ADRS.

Record Snowfall Causes Damages and Strands Residents in San Bernardino County Southern California Mountains for up to 2 Weeks

By: Alexander Tardy, Warning Coordination Meteorologist at WFO San Diego



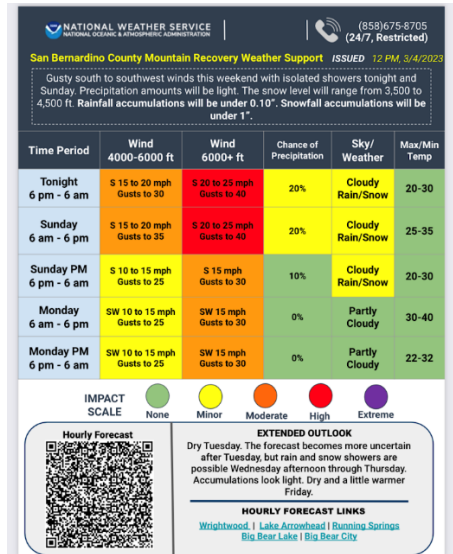
State Highway 18, Arctic Circle, old and new snow in March. This route to Big Bear City was closed for 3 weeks.

Photo by Alex Tardy.

The San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services developed an Incident Management Team and activated their Emergency Operation Center (EOC) starting February 28 and continued it through April 3. The EOC led two times a day conference calls with all supporting agency partners (Red Cross, SoCal Gas, Southern California Edison, Public Works, Highway Patrol, Transportation, Hospitals and School districts) using MS teams. National Weather Service San Diego provided the detailed weather briefings seven days a week in addition to the daily snowfall prediction IDSS provided to the agencies. A first ever Blizzard warning was issued prior to the storm for the San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains. NWS also participated in the public information officer and mountain hospital coordination calls to further collaborate messaging to the public. San Bernardino County led a live press conference on March 1 to address the emergency situation.

From February 22 through March 1, two polar cold fronts and atmospheric rivers combined to bring unprecedented snowfall to the San Bernardino Mountains. The 7 day snowfall totals of 70 to 110 inches were a record in areas such as Big Bear Lake, Mount Baldy, and Lake Arrowhead. The systems were cold enough to bring snow levels down to the coast and also resulted in two episodes of damaging winds, knocking down trees along the coast and damaging structures in the deserts.

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NWS daily weather support briefing for San Bernardino County OES

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Media and social media coverage of the recovery efforts was daily and extensive.

The response effort resulted in 7800 calls for assistance, nearly 300 rescues from the mountain, 10 home fires due to snow weight damage to gas and meter lines, and almost 2 weeks of state highway closures. Many homes suffered roof damage from the weight of the snow, and the Crestline grocery store had a complete collapse of the structure. The California National Guard and other emergency agencies provided assistance including helicopter drops, and there were five food stations set up across the mountains providing meals for between 500 and 1500 people daily for 3 weeks into early April. SoCal gas had one of the biggest impacts due to the heavy snow, including 400 service calls for gas leaks and damaged pipes. Overall, 100 inches of snow fell at Lake Arrowhead and Crestline at 5000 feet and as much as 140 inches at 7000 feet. Snowfall in 24 hour duration during the two episodes were between 24 and 40 inches. Big Bear Lake received 82 inches of snow, which exceeds their all-time record for seven day snowfall. NWS-specific Caltrans daily briefings predicted a maximum snowfall up to 84 inches at the 6500 foot elevation February 21- 27 and another 32 inches February 28 to March 1. Caltrans reported that 15 million cubic yards of snow was removed and transported off the highways. Ski resorts were unable to operate due to road closures, avalanches, and removal of heavy snow for about a week, with one resort staying closed for almost 2 weeks.

WFO Raleigh Holds Broadcast Media Workshop

By: NWS Staff



Media Workshop, February 15, from left to right: WFO RAH **Andrew Kren**, WFMY **Christian Morgan**, WFO RAH MIC **Jonathan Blaes**, WFO RAH **Chrissy Anderson**, WFMY **Tim Bukley**, WRAL **Aimee Wilmoth**, CBS17 **Wes Hohenstein**, WRAL **Elizabeth Gardener** and **Brian Schrader**, WFO RAH **SOO Dan Leins**, CBS17 **Laura Smith**, WFO RAH **Brandon Locklear**, ABC 11 **Robert Johnson**, CBS17 **Lance Blocker**, WFO RAH WCM **Nick Petro** (Not Pictured: ABC11 **Donald Schwenneker**).

On February 15 and March 1, NWS RAH hosted in-person workshops for its broadcast media partners covering Central North Carolina. This was the first in-person workshop since the COVID pandemic started in 2020. Broadcast meteorologists from the Raleigh-Triangle and Greensboro-Triad TV markets attended.

A major portion of the workshop was spent discussing coordination techniques between media partners and the WFO, especially during severe weather. WFO RAH discussed how they could improve and build upon communication with the broadcast meteorologists even during periods of quiet weather. Topics included spring season pattern recognition, cold air damming, local forecast tools, how to read and use ensemble datasets, and severe weather topics. The Hazard Simplification (Haz Simp) Project and the simplification of Watch, Warning, and Advisory (WWA) products was discussed. Finally, the workshop concluded with an inside look at how NWS RAH operates during severe weather, including an interactive exercise for its partners to participate in.

Suggestions included the following:

- Media partners would appreciate being kept informed in NWSChat of hazardous weather development that is potentially severe. Stations require that they remain on-air during the entire duration of a TOR warning. Therefore, partners would appreciate it if the office passed along as much information as they can for the duration of the warning, even an update that no new info has come in or to tell them why a Tornado Warning is still active.
- Viewers love to send storm damage reports to TV stations. Broadcast mets will try to pass along more reports to the office by chatting and/or tagging NWSRaleigh on social media.
- Media can pass along any major damage reports to us directly (phone call/NWSchat), especially if a camera crew is onsite or going to a certain location.

A few quotes from broadcast meteorologists who attended the workshop:

“It was SO nice seeing everyone in person! I really liked hearing about the models that y’all have started to use when forecasting...always nice to see what other mets are looking at to get their forecast numbers.”

“Great information and networking. Loved the updates on upcoming model changes – and the severe weather exercise was eye-opening!”

Holding media partner workshops allows NWS Raleigh to grow partnerships with the local media as well as receive constructive feedback on how they can better communicate during high-impact weather events. These workshops not only allow them to create a better Weather-Ready Nation, but facilitate a deeper relationship with their core media partners to work together and inform the public about potential weather related hazards. WFO RAH is looking forward to hosting



Media Workshop, March 1, from left to right: WFO RAH **Gail Hartfield**, WFO RAH Hydrologist **Barret Smith**, WFO RAH WCM **Nick Petro**, WFO RAH **Jimmy Danco**, Spectrum1News **Lee Ringer**, WFO RAH **Brandon Locklear**, WXII **Brian Slocum**, WFO RAH **Andrew Kren**, WGHP **Alex Schneider**, WXII **Lanie Pope**, CBS17 **Rachel Duensing**, WFO RAH **Tom Green**, WFO RAH **Chrissy Anderson**, WFO RAH **SOO Dan Leins**, ABC11 **Kweilyn Murphy**, WRAL **Peta Sheerwood**, WFO RAH **Jimmy Taeger**.

additional media workshops over the summer and fall in order to learn more about what their media partners need. They also will be conducting in person Weather Event Simulations with the broadcast meteorologists to help them better understand NWS severe weather operations.



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NOAA's National Weather Service, Analyze, Forecast and Support Office

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Aware online: www.weather.gov/publications/aware | ISSN 1936-8178

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