



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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### DEBRIS FLOW EVACUATION MAP RELEASED

Following the 2017 Thomas Fire in Santa Barbara County, debris flows – fast-moving, deadly masses of mud, rocks, boulders, entire trees – around the community of Montecito resulted in the deaths of 23 residents.

To minimize the risk of a similar scenario following the CZU Lightning Complex fires, the County of Santa Cruz, local partners including Cal Fire and local fire agencies, and officials from the California Office for Emergency Services have begun extensive planning to address the risk to residents from debris flows. With evacuations likely during the upcoming rainy season, residents are being urged to “Know Your Zone” by looking up their address on the Debris Flow Hazard Risk Map, available at <https://community.zonehaven.com>.

While the entire CZU Lightning Complex is an area considered to be at risk, county geologists have determined that thousands of residents face elevated debris flow risks and could face evacuations – potentially multiple evacuations – depending on weather conditions. Those areas are denoted on the Risk Evaluation Map by dark blue polygons. Assessments are based on geology, topography, burn severity and evidence of historic debris flows, among other factors.

Should evacuations be necessary, the County urges residents to take this risk seriously. All residents within evacuated areas should leave, regardless of the circumstances or location of their residence. Should a debris flow occur, access to impacted areas may be cut off, and rescues by public safety personnel may not be possible. County public safety and emergency management staff will make evacuation determinations with the safety of residents as the highest priority.

Debris flows can be triggered by short bursts of rain, and little can be done to mitigate the risk to communities in the immediate aftermath of a large fire. For more information



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and an FAQ, visit the County's debris flow information page at <https://www.santacruzcounty.us/FireRecovery/DebrisFlowsMudflows.aspx>.

Residents are reminded that they should not be locating RVs, trailers, tents or other temporary habitation structures onto properties that have not been evaluated for geologic risk. Doing so places individuals and families at risk for debris flows and other geologic hazards.

Residents within the burn perimeter but outside dark blue polygons face lower risks from debris flows and are less likely to be evacuated.

Regardless of their risk level, all residents should sign up for emergency alerts. Visit <https://www.scr911.org/general/page/codered> or text "SCR911" to 99411 to sign up. Residents should also download the CodeRed app for their smartphones.

In advance of any rain events, residents are also advised to tune in to local news, utilize weather radios or follow County social media to stay up-to-date on the latest information.