



### **What are the interim FEMA Recovery Maps being released on June 11, 2018?**

Following the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) developed Recovery Maps for Santa Barbara County to supplement the areas of special flood hazards currently identified. The interim Recovery Maps were developed for communities and property owners to make informed decisions about rebuilding. Recovery Maps are separate from the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

### **What is the process for approval of the FEMA Recovery Maps in Santa Barbara County?**

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors will consider the Floodplain Administrator's recommendation that the FEMA Recovery Maps be used to supplement the areas of special flood hazards identified in the county at its regular meeting at 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 19 in Santa Maria. View the maps at <https://readysbc.org/maps/>.

### **Who is the "Floodplain Administrator?"**

The Floodplain Administrator is the Flood Control Director or his/her designated agent. The Flood Control Director for Santa Barbara County is Tom Fayram, Deputy Director for Water Resources.

### **Who is FEMA working with to develop the flood hazard maps?**

FEMA has a contract with the Strategic Alliance for Risk Reduction (STARR) allowing their work on completion of the interim advisory flood maps for Santa Barbara County. STARR is comprised of multiple experts in the areas of mapping, risk assessment, risk communication and mitigation planning.

### **Why are the FEMA maps considered interim?**

The FEMA maps will determine the areas of special flood hazard and used for development and rebuilding in the Montecito and unincorporated Carpinteria area until the permanent Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) mapping of the area is completed. FEMA advises that these new maps be used in conjunction with the existing FIRMs, using whichever base flood elevation is higher, until the new FIRM is published. These maps will help in bridging the time until the new FIRMs are developed.

### **Will this new map impact my flood insurance rates?**

The updated flood advisory recovery maps do not affect insurance considerations. The current FEMA flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) will be used for insurance purposes until new, permanent maps are developed in the next 4 to 5 years.

### **Can homeowners purchase flood insurance now?**

Yes. Santa Barbara County is eligible for disaster assistance and requires homes located in FEMA designated flood risk areas to have flood insurance if their mortgage is with a federally insured lending institution. However, regardless of location, any homeowner is eligible to purchase flood insurance.

### **Will the FEMA maps require homeowners to elevate homes when rebuilding?**

The County has adopted floodplain management standards to protect new development and rebuilding of destroyed structures that are in alignment with federal requirements. Typically, minimum requirements are for the elevation of new structures within the special flood hazard area is two feet above the 100-year flood plain as defined by FEMA.

# Santa Barbara County

## FEMA Interim Recovery Flood Maps

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#### **Changed Conditions Due to Fire/Flood**

Recovery Maps do not replace the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), but the advisory flood elevations from the new Recovery Maps are based on sound science and engineering, new analyses, and are derived from post-fire flows and post-debris flow ground conditions. In many cases, the Recovery Map advisory flood elevations reflect higher elevation than the current effective FIRM.

#### **Mapping Purpose - Recovery Maps for Safer Rebuild**

Mapping hazards is vital for safe disaster recovery; it provides the data necessary for new construction and creates awareness of risk. As communities recover from the devastating effects of these recent events, it is important to recognize valuable lessons learned. Santa Barbara County plans to use the updated elevation information generated from this study to rebuild stronger, safer, and with reduced vulnerability to future disaster events. When making building elevation decisions, compare the effective FIRM to the new Recovery Map, and use the higher elevation and wider high-hazard area. Property and business owners should consult with their local building official to fully understand how this new data can be used to support rebuilding efforts. The Recovery Maps do not impact rating for flood insurance.

#### **High Hazard Areas on Recovery Maps**

The changed ground conditions due to mud on the ground and clogged waterways caused the need to map the existing conditions hazard. The areas colored in the overlay are the mapped High Hazard Areas which represent areas that are wet in the new hydraulic models, including shallow flow areas. To facilitate a safety element appropriate to the changed conditions within the High Hazard Areas, the rebuilding will be informed by the water surface elevations within the boundary.

#### **Depth Grids for Additional Safety Information**

Depth grids are additional safety information within the High Hazard area that identify places with the greatest vulnerability. The depth grids can help your community better understand, communicate, and relay the variability and severity of post-wildfire hazard at any given location of the study area. The depth grids are represented in various shades of purple and blue in the mapped High Hazard area (see Legend). The map only shows depths greater than 0.5 foot based on a 1% annual chance rainfall. The depths represent the modeled water depth on top of the post-event terrain (i.e., water depth on top of the debris/mud deposits). The depth grids should be reviewed and taken into consideration during the rebuilding process.

#### **Limitations of Mapping**

The Recovery Maps for Santa Barbara County have the benefit of using the latest modeling technology and topographic data available and can provide valuable insight into what would happen during a large rain event. The modeling and analyses also provide a basis for future mapping that may be used to update the FIRM for Santa Barbara County. However, due to the complex nature of debris flow events and the unknown degree of uncertainty of the assumptions made, actual areas of future inundation depend on conditions that may be different from what is shown in the mapping tool. The Recovery Maps should only be used to guide rebuilding along with information from the FEMA FIRM and County guidance. This Recovery Mapping will NOT be used to determine evacuations. Evacuations will be based on other factors and mapping.