



City of Malibu News

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California Office of Emergency Services Issues Statewide Standardized Evacuation Terminology

(Malibu, CA) – The City of Malibu recently received a notice from the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) outlining Statewide Standardized Evacuation Terminology. The revised terminology includes the following new terms:

Evacuation Order: Immediate threat to life. This is a lawful order to leave now. The area is lawfully closed to public access.

Evacuation Warning: Potential threat to life and/or property. Those who require additional time to evacuate, and those with pets and livestock should leave now.

Shelter in Place: Go indoors. Shut and lock doors and windows. Prepare to self-sustain until further notice and/or contacted by emergency personnel for additional direction.

Evacuation Order(s) Lifted: The formal announcement of lifting evacuations in an area currently under evacuation.

Hard Closure: Closed to all traffic except fire and law enforcement.

Soft Closure: Closed to all traffic except Fire, law enforcement and critical incident resources (i.e. Caltrans, city/county roads etc. or those needed to repair or restore infrastructure).

Resident only Closure: Soft closure with the additional allowance of residents and local government agencies assisting with response and recovery.

The effort to create standard terminology arose from the catastrophic wildfires of 2017 and 2018, which exposed inconsistencies in the terminology that different agencies used when informing residents of the need to evacuate, shelter in place, and to return home. It was found that these discrepancies in terminology frequently led to confusion.

In response, Cal OES convened a working group comprised of law enforcement and representatives from throughout California, as well as Firefighting Resources Organized for Potential Emergencies (FIRESCOPE). This group, in consultation with additional subject matter experts, compiled the new list of clear terminology for ordering evacuations.

The City of Malibu will incorporate these new terms into all public education and planning documents. For more information, contact the Public Safety Manager at 310-456-2489, ext 313 or sduenas@malibucity.org.

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