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Armories Open All Weekend During Storm

Santa Ana, Calif. (Jan. 20, 2017) – With coordination and support from the California Military Department and in conjunction with the County Office of Emergency Services and the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the Orange County Cold Weather Armory Emergency Shelters (armories) located at both Santa Ana and Fullerton will operate with extended hours to provide shelter and protection to the homeless community during the upcoming storm.

“We want to encourage those who are experiencing homelessness to seek shelter during this upcoming storm. Having the armories open all day is vital to providing a safe solution and a warm, dry place to stay,” said Chairwoman Michelle Steel, Second District Supervisor.

Due to the severe weather event expected in Orange County and the region, Mercy House Living Centers, Inc., the operator of the armories, will provide shelter services at the Santa Ana (families and single women) and Fullerton (single individuals) armories throughout the day beginning Friday, Jan. 20, 2017, at 6 a.m. with continuous activation through the day on Monday, Jan. 23, 2017. The armories will resume regular operations the evening of Monday, Jan. 23, with operating hours from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

“This is part of the County’s comprehensive plan to address homelessness,” said Supervisor Andrew Do. “Like the Santa Ana Transit Terminal, we were able to provide a safe place for hundreds of people to take shelter, because no one should have to endure the rain and cold.”

The armories provide up to 200 beds per night at each site at the National Guard Armories in Fullerton and Santa Ana. The homeless will receive a nutritious meal, a warm shower, and a safe place to sleep. Volunteers will pass out donations of warm clothing, and onsite service providers from Orange County will also offer needed services.

“People are at heightened risk in severe weather and the County is proactive with our emergency services for precisely a situation like this,” said Supervisor Todd Spitzer, Third District. “When we have 50-year storms expected through the weekend, it’s imperative to provide refuge for those who are the most vulnerable.”

The County is also taking action to warn those in homeless encampments along the riverbed and flood channels. “The riverbed and flood channels are not safe for human habitation regularly, but particularly during a rainstorm,” said Supervisor Shawn Nelson, Fourth District. “County staff have given multiple warnings of the storms and the rising water levels.”

In addition to the seasonal armories, in October 2016 the County of Orange opened The Courtyard Transitional Center in Santa Ana at the former OCTA bus terminal site. “With the opening of the Courtyard as a year-round shelter, we have provided the opportunity for more than 350 people to have a safe place to sleep, with hot showers, meals and links to services every day,” said Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District.

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