

Strong Winter Storm Briefing

A strong Pacific storm system is slated to impact the Northern and Central California coast overnight lasting into at least Thursday evening. There are two significant hazards that will impact mariners traveling the coast during this event. The first hazard is a large west swell with wave heights ranging from 15 to 20 feet with occasionally larger sets moving through the waters. The second significant hazard will be extremely strong gusty southerly winds which are anticipated to ramp up overnight. Sustained winds will reach high end gale warning criteria ranging from 35 to 40 kt with frequent storm force gusts reaching 50 to 60 kt plus.

The combination of large west swell coupled with the strong southerly winds will result in a chaotic sea state that will be extremely dangerous to mariners. Additionally, the large swell will result in significant shoaling in the vicinity of near shore reefs and coastal bars. Breaking waves across the San Francisco Bar will exceed 20 feet. Mariners are urged to use caution entering exiting harbors due to this shoaling threat.

At the beaches large surf is expected and a High Surf Advisory is in effect through Friday. The largest surf is expected to occur at deep water point breaks but much of the wave energy will be in place at all central and northern California beach, creating dangerous conditions for beach goers. Strong rip currents are expected but the **most significant threat will be excessive run up of water onto the beaches and sneaker waves.**

NWS Hazards in Place

- **Gale warning** in effect through Thursday Afternoon.
 - 35 to 40 kt with **frequent storm force gusts** 50 to 60 kt plus
 - More info <http://1.usa.gov/12FYPUg>
- **Rough Bar** in effect for the San Francisco Bar through at least Friday
 - **Breakers** in excess of 20 feet
- **High Surf Advisory** in effect through Friday
 - Large breaking waves ranging from 20 feet plus with long periods between wave sets
 - <http://1.usa.gov/1enOPYF>

Expected Impacts

Mariners

- Large west swell ranging from 15 to 20 feet with occasionally larger sets
- Shoaling in the vicinity of near shore reefs, sand bars and harbor entrances
- Hazardous conditions across the San Francisco bar
 - Breakers exceeding 20 feet
- Strong southerly winds sustained 35 to 40 kt with frequent storm force gusts 50 to 60kt plus.
- Chaotic seas as a result of the large west swell and strong southerly winds.

Beaches

- Large breaking waves at deep water breaks and point breaks
- Excessive run up and **sneaker waves** potentially washing people from rocks and beaches
- Strong Rip currents, it is advise to avoid the water over the next few days.

Safety Tips

Mariners

- First and foremost seek safe harbor
- Ensure that all of your lines are in good condition and secure
- Check your cockpit drain plugs
- Make sure that your bilge pumps are operational
- Secure loose sails and sail covers
- Stowe loose items like ice chests and bumpers

Beaches

- Do not go into the water for the next few days
 - There will be exceptionally strong currents and large waves
- If visiting the beach stand far back from the water
 - Keep in mind that if the sand is wet from a wave it will be wet again
- Do not climb or fish from rocks and jetties
 - Waves may wash you from them into the ocean
- Avoid steep beaches such as Carmel River Beach, Monestary Beach, Montara Beach and Ocean Beach.
- If you see someone washed into the water do not try to rescue them, you may become a victim yourself, **CALL 911** immediately.

Contact the National Weather Service office in Monterey for more info

www.weather.gov/sanfrancisco

www.twitter.com/nwsbayarea

www.facebook.com/nwsbayarea

Non Public Phone number contacts

(831) 656-1717 – Emergency Management

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