

High winds will hit Bay Area along with storms this weekend

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A student is reflected in a puddle while walking through Sproul Plaza as rain makes its way into the San Francisco Bay Area on the campus of UC Berkeley, in Berkeley, Calif., on Friday, March 4, 2016. (Anda Chu/Bay Area News Group) (ANDA CHU)

Lock up the lawn chairs, fold up the yard umbrellas and anchor down your cat: The Bay Area is bracing for one of this winter's windiest weekends.

The National Weather Service has issued a wind advisory as Saturday's storm blows in, blasting the region with gusts up to 50 mph -- enough to shake an SUV on the road.

"This is a good weekend to plan indoor activities," said forecaster Bob Benjamin of the National Weather Service in Monterey.

The deluge will strike Saturday afternoon and continue into Sunday. Then, a second storm will soak the region on Sunday evening to begin a rainy week. Forecasters predict the weekend's storms will dump

about 2 inches through Monday in San Jose, Concord, Berkeley and Oakland and up to 5 inches in Santa Cruz, with higher elevations in the Santa Cruz Mountains getting up to 10 inches.

RAIN ON THE WAY

Storms will deliver significant rain this weekend, peaking Saturday night. Expected totals through Wednesday:



Source: National Weather Service

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Benjamin warned that trees dried by drought may have weaker roots and fall more easily, especially in higher, blustery elevations in the Santa Cruz Mountains. When they tumble, the trees can bring down power lines.

PG&E spokeswoman Mayra Tostado said crews spent Friday morning clipping down branches that seemed dangerously close to electrical lines.

"We have a storm-outage prediction model," Tostado said, "so our crews are strategically located to respond safely and quickly for when storms happen and where we expect outages to occur."

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Like most Bay Area storms, these tempests are moving in from the Pacific. Meteorologist Jan Null of Golden Gate Weather Services said the pressurized ridge that prevented rain from coming to California in February has now migrated eastward, portending dry days for the Rockies but a wetter March for the Golden State. Because the upcoming storms originated in the South Pacific, the air will be warm, the better to transport water to the parched Bay Area.

Nonetheless, Null warned Californians not to get overly concerned about the upcoming winds and rains. Though the weekend will bring much needed water, he said storms like this wouldn't rank in the top 50

wettest of the past 50 years. "It's going to be a nice winter storm, and it's going to bring some nice rainfall," he said of Saturday's rain, "but it's not going to be epic."

The benefits and hazards of a deluge leave Bay Area residents of mixed minds about the upcoming rain. San Jose resident Jesse Chavez, who sat on a bench in downtown San Jose during Friday's afternoon drizzle, said he looks forward to the downpour. "I personally really like gloomy weather," he said with a chuckle. "I get really irritated when it's hot."

Also outside Friday afternoon in downtown San Jose, motorcycle commuter Erik Rousell, of Los Gatos, said he felt more conflicted.

"I'm happy about it from an environmental standpoint," Rousell said, citing the need to replenish the state's water supply. "But I'm bummed about it from a motorcycle standpoint."

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