



News Release

October 24, 2018

Winter weather is unpredictable, but one thing is certain: Flooding in King County

King County leaders urge preparedness to ensure people and property remain safe during flood season

Despite the mild weather defining this fall, King County Executive Dow Constantine and Flood District Chair Reagan Dunn are urging preparedness for the inevitable flooding that occurs every year. King County provides many ways to help people prepare, from flood alerts to sandbags.

“Our dedicated employees stand ready with partners at every level of government to respond to flooding throughout King County,” said Executive Constantine. “I encourage everyone in our region to take a moment this month to prepare for possible flooding, including signing up to receive King County flood alerts.”

“I urge everyone to be aware of potential flood risks at home, along their commute route, and at work, and to take the necessary steps to stay safe throughout this flood season,” said King County Flood Control District Chair Reagan Dunn.

King County has experienced 12 federally declared flood disasters since 1990.

To prepare for a flood emergency, families can assemble a basic emergency preparedness kit for the home, with items such as a flashlight with spare batteries, a portable radio, non-perishable food, drinking water, and books or games for younger family members.

King County also offers free access to KC Flood Alerts, an automated system that allows subscribers to receive customized alerts of potential flooding for any or all of King County’s six major river systems.

Immediate notifications about pending high water are sent to email, smart phone text or voicemail, providing subscribers with the maximum amount of warning about potential high water.

Sign up for KC Flood Alerts at kingcounty.gov/flood. This website is a valuable preparedness resource, with all of the latest information about river levels and road conditions, plus weather reports and other critical links.

King County also issues flood-related notifications and other emergency information via ALERT King County, a regional emergency information and notification system. Learn more at kingcounty.gov/alert.

Additional preparations for flood season include:

- Buying flood insurance now; it takes 30 days for a policy to take effect, and a standard insurance policy will not cover flood damage. Contact your insurance agent or visit www.floodsmart.gov.
- Monitoring area news media for information when severe weather is predicted. Listen for alerts about evacuation routes, and monitor local road conditions and obey closure signs.
- Minimizing flood damage by storing valuables and electronics higher, and by moving vehicles and equipment to high ground before flood waters rise.
- Disposing of hazardous chemicals, such as lawn and gardening herbicides, at one of the county's household hazardous waste sites to help reduce harmful contaminants in flood waters. Learn more at kingcounty.gov/hazwaste.

Once a flood event is imminent, King County employees will mobilize and begin to gather, analyze and distribute flood warning information so that residents, businesses, property owners and emergency response officials can make important health, safety and economic decisions.

When river levels rise to designated thresholds, King County's Flood Warning Center is opened and staffed around-the-clock to monitor river gages, weather data, dam operations and road closures. When warranted, staff are dispatched to address safety concerns, such as flooded roadways, and to check on flood control facilities.

When the Flood Warning Center is open, citizens can directly contact King County staff 24 hours a day with their flooding concerns and questions by calling 206-296-8200 or 1-800-945-9263.

Questions or assistance with flooding on smaller streams or urban drainage problems can be called in to 206-477-4811 during business hours, or 206-296-8100 after hours or on weekends.

Efforts to protect people and property have earned King County the highest rating of any county in the United States under Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System. King County's high CRS rating saves flood insurance policyholders in unincorporated King County over \$1 million per year – an average of \$450 per policy.

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The King County Flood Control District is a special purpose government created to provide funding and policy oversight for flood protection projects and programs in King County. The Flood Control District's Board is composed of the members of the King County Council. The Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks develops and implements the approved flood protection projects and programs. Information is available at www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org.