

ESF 8 Health & Medical Area Command Bulletin

PREPARING FOR FLOODING IN THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY

December 21, 2009

Bulletin #9

The Situation

Due to damage along the Howard Hanson Dam, which provides flood control along the Green River, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has indicated there is a greater risk of significant flooding during periods of heavy rain throughout the lower Green River Valley, including the cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila. The USACE has taken a number of steps to try and minimize the flood risk. Contractors have completed work on a second grout curtain to help reduce seepage coming from the dam. Because of this effort, the USACE anticipates the dam will now operate at 50% capacity (an improvement from 30% prior to the new grout curtain). In addition, a series of flood protection and mitigation efforts have been completed along some of the potentially vulnerable levees on the Green River. While many improvements have been made, the USACE and local governments continue to warn that risk of severe flooding still exists.

The cities of Auburn, Kent, Renton and Tukwila, King County government agencies and private utility partners have taken many steps to prepare for the 2009-2010 flood season.

Primary efforts include:

- Identifying evacuation routes
- Developing an evacuation & public warning strategies
- Planning general population & medical needs shelters
- Assessing & mitigating critical infrastructure (e.g. power, natural gas, water, sewer and transportation) impacts that may result from the floods

Environmental Health Risks of Flooding: Rodents & Flooding (New)



After a flood rats, mice and other rodents are displaced from their natural habitat. As a result, these animals will attempt to move to higher ground and into buildings to escape floodwaters, seek shelter and food. Rats and mice can cause property damage, electrical fires, and potentially carry disease and parasites. It is important to take measures in advance of and following a flood event to reduce the risks.

What can residents and business owners do now?

- Seal any opening a ½ inch or bigger around foundation walls or eaves where pipes or wiring enter; gaps around windows or vents. Repair all broken or missing screening in attic or crawlspace vents with ¼-inch hardware cloth.
- Cut back all vegetation away from the side of your homes and any that overhangs the roof.
- All food should be stored in rodent resistant containers (including pet foods).
- Consider hiring a professional pest control company to locate access points and perform exclusion work prior to any infestation.

What diseases do rats carry that I should be concerned about for my family and pets?

- Leptospirosis and rat bite fever are the most common disease threats to humans and pets.
- Do not try to touch a rat or attempt to move them to higher ground by picking them up. They are likely to be very stressed and liable to bite. (Continued on page 2)

About this Bulletin:

Health and Medical Area Command is activated at Public Health – Seattle & King County to coordinate health, medical and mortuary planning for regional hazards including H1N1 influenza and the Howard Hanson Dam – Green River Valley flood risks. We have issued regular bulletins on these topics to outline key situational updates, planning activities and information specific to health, medical and mortuary response.

critical resources

[King County Flood Services](#)

[King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

[Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)

[US Army Corps of Engineers](#)

[Flood insurance](#)

[Personal & Family Preparedness](#)

Environmental Health Risks of Flooding:

Rodents & Flooding

(Continued from pg 1)

Before a flood, or just after, rodents may move in mass to higher ground, and stay on after a flood.

What steps can you take to control new rodent populations in your yard or neighborhood?

- Work together as a neighborhood and help each other out. Working together with neighbors will help prevent an infestation from being established within a neighborhood. A rat will usually stay within 150 feet of its food source, but once a colony has reached a point where the food source is no longer able to sustain it, the colony will begin to scatter into the neighborhoods looking for another food source and harborage.

Spotlighting Resources & Information

King County adds new Alert System

Stay informed of potential high water

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/dnrp/newsroom/newsreleases/2009/november/1113Alert-system.aspx>

Green River Flood Evacuation Routes

The PDF identifies evacuation routes for Washington State Department of Transportation, local jurisdictions and unincorporated King County

http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/-/media/transportation/kcdot/roads/maintenance/docs/HH_flyer_carto_standards_rev1.ashx

Sandbag Distribution Information

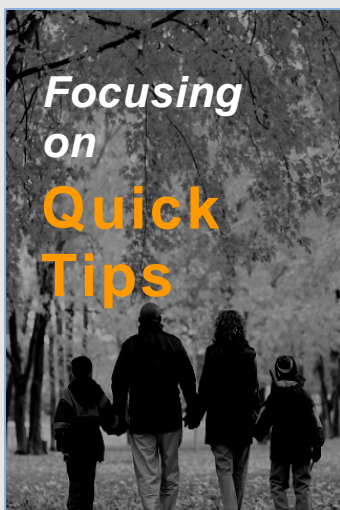
Includes the locations and hours of operation of facilities within the GRV distributing sandbags to residents

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/flooding/sandbag-distribution.aspx>

Bank Stabilization & Levee Setback Projects

Find out more about the efforts being implemented to mitigate the impacts of flooding on King County Rivers

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/flooding/bank-stabilization-projects.aspx>



Working Together to Get Ready

Most people in an emergency are helped first by their neighbors. One way to use the information about the possibility of a flood in the Green River is to talk about what might happen with your family, friends and community members. Small groups of people with good information who organize themselves can make a big difference.

- Plan now for how you can help each other.
- Decide how you will let each other know if flooding is happening.
- Let a neighbor know you'll knock on the door.
- Set up a phone tree with people you trust to be sure you all have warning. Decide now where you will go if you need to leave your home by talking the possibilities over with others in your community.

Coping with Disaster

The effects of floods go beyond damage to buildings, disruption of services and evacuation of people. It also impacts our emotions, behaviors and, often, our ability to cope. Disasters can cause strain in relationships, loss of daily routine, and perception of loss of control over one's life. Just as we all need to prepare our homes, businesses, families and communities for possible flooding in the Green River Valley, we should also prepare ourselves mentally for the psychological impact it will bring. Take time to understand the common reactions and expected impacts disasters have on survivors and responders. Below are links to online resources to help you prepare.

- [Tips for Survivors of Traumatic Events: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work and Financial Life](#)
- [CDC - Disaster Mental Health Resources](#)

Get Advance Warning. Subscribe to [RPIN] Regional Public Information Network

RPIN will email you the latest information and alerts as soon as news breaks.

Sign up today

<http://www.rpin.org/rpinweb/>



King County is offering free

Flood Alerts to help keep you informed of flood conditions

*Sign up for email updates

From Public Health – Seattle & King County about Green River Basin Flooding

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/grreenriverbasin.aspx>

questions?

Please email

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