

## **Flooding Frequently Asked Questions**

Public Works & Utilities Surface Water Management Division

### **Will the Howard Hanson Dam issue affect Pierce County?**

Not directly. Flooding downstream of the Howard Hanson Dam will be on the Green River which is in King County. Should significant flooding occur in King County, it is possible that regional transportation corridors would be shut down, temporarily affecting Pierce County commute routes and the delivery of goods and services into Pierce County.

### **Didn't they repair the Howard Hanson Dam this past year?**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has reduced some risk after making repairs to damage that occurred to an earthen bank next to the dam after record high water in January, 2009. However, more work remains before the dam can operate at full flood capacity. There is still a risk of flooding in the lower Green River Valley if the region experiences heavy and prolonged rain this flood season.

### **Is Pierce County as vulnerable to flooding as King County?**

Not in the same way. Pierce County relies on Mud Mountain Dam to control flooding along the White River and the lower Puyallup River, and that facility is fully operational. However, there are very real flood risks in Pierce County. Areas that have been flooded or threatened by flooding in past years remain at risk.

### **Is the levee system stronger or weaker than it was during the last flood?**

Most levee damage from past floods has been repaired, restoring those areas to the same level of protection they previously had.

### **What have we done to prepare for flooding this season?**

In addition to the repairs and sandbagging, Pierce County has actively prepared for the upcoming flood season, putting communication and support networks in place between local, State and Federal agencies to respond to a major flood. Flood response materials have been stockpiled, including large sand bags.

### **What effort has been made to prepare the citizens of Pierce County?**

Every year, Pierce County sends out a flood bulletin, which includes flood preparedness information, to property owners living in flood hazard areas. For a copy of this year's flood bulletin, contact Surface Water Management at (253) 798-2725. On October 9<sup>th</sup>, Department of Emergency Management hosted a Preparedness Fair where flood preparedness information was handed out to the public.

## **Where can I get more information about flooding in Pierce County?**

Call Surface Water Management Division at (253)798-2725 or visit [www.piercecountywa.org/flood](http://www.piercecountywa.org/flood) for information on:

- Current flooding conditions on our major rivers (Flood Warning System)
- What to do before, during and after a flood (Flood Preparedness)
- Rivers Flood Hazard Management Plan
- Flood Control Zone District
- Additional information and contacts

## **How can I be alerted about emergencies?**

During an emergency, you may be alerted via radio, TV, telephone and sometimes door-to-door. Pierce County Department of Emergency Management encourages residents to sign up for the new mass notification system, Pierce County ALERT. Residents receive emergency alerts on a variety of devices (cell phones, work phones, e-mail, faxes, text messages, etc.). To sign up visit [www.piercecountywa.gov/alert](http://www.piercecountywa.gov/alert) or call Department of Emergency Management at (253)798-6595.

## **Where can I get sandbags?**

Contact Pierce County Department of Emergency Management at (253)798-6595. They will direct you to your local Fire Department Headquarters for sand bags, sand and other alternatives.

## **Where do I report flooding or get updated flooding information?**

To report flooding in unincorporated Pierce County or to hear updated flood information, call Surface Water Management Division at (253)798-4274 (24-hour hotline with a recorded message and options for reporting)

To report flooding on roads in unincorporated Pierce County, call Road Maintenance Division at (253)798-6000 (staffed 24 hours /365 days a year)

To report flooding anywhere in Pierce County and to hear urgent flood warnings, call Department of Emergency Management at (253)798-6595 (staffed 24 hours/365 days a year).

## **Can I buy flood insurance just before a flood?**

Anyone can purchase flood insurance at any time by contacting their insurance agent. However, for new flood insurance policies, there is a 30-day period before it goes into effect. For a list of FEMA-trained insurance agents in Pierce County, visit [www.piercecountywa.org/floodinsco](http://www.piercecountywa.org/floodinsco). Up to a 35% discount on flood insurance is available to unincorporated Pierce County property owners and renters because the county is a Community Rating System (CRS) member and has a highly rated flood management plan.

**Will federal disaster assistance pay for flood damage?**

Federal disaster assistance is available only if the President declares a disaster. Typically, assistance is a loan that must be repaid with interest. Following a federal disaster declaration, some financial assistance is available, but usually only for short-term housing, not repairs.