



**King County**

## ***News Release***

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### **King County leaders urge floodplain residents to guard against complacency**

**Officials recognize October as Flood Awareness Month, urge people to get new free flood warning app, develop a flood preparedness plan**

Bucking its oft-flooded history, King County has recorded fairly mild flood seasons the last two years. But one of the region's wettest Septembers, including a weekend of record-setting rain, is prompting a warning to floodplain residents to guard against complacency.

"As the recent tragic flooding in Colorado has shown, we never know when a serious flood may occur," said Flood Control District Chair Reagan Dunn. "Now more than ever it is important we take the risk of flooding seriously and take the necessary steps well ahead of time to prepare and be ready."

The members of the Metropolitan King County Council, who serve as the supervisors of the King County Flood Control District, were joined today by County Executive Dow Constantine in declaring [October Blue Awareness Month](#) in King County.

"Don't let our recent mild winters deceive you," said Executive Constantine. "King County has experienced 12 federally declared flood disasters in the last 23 years, and everyone must stay prepared."

The Flood District is wrapping up a busy construction season aimed at improving the County's levee system. And King County is gearing up for the flood season by readying its Flood Warning Center and offering new tools to help residents get up to the minute flood warning information.

"The Flood District is working to help protect residents by reducing flood risks at the source, as well as providing assistance and notifications when flooding is imminent," said Flood District Supervisor Kathy Lambert, who represents the frequently flooded Snoqualmie Valley. "We know it is not a matter of if it will flood

but when. So by maximizing the District's flood warning resources, while residents also work to be personally prepared, we can create more resilient communities."

"The stormy weather this weekend reminds us we need to be prepared," said Flood Control District Vice Chair Julia Patterson. "Now is the perfect time to get ready for the heavy rains and whatever else Mother Nature has in store for King County this winter."

"Flood waters don't recognize boundaries and is a concern regardless of where you live in King County," said Flood Control District Executive Committee member Larry Gossett. "The wet weather is already here, so County residents should prepare for the results of winter weather."

King County has released a new King County Flood Warning app, to help safeguard people and their property by providing real-time flooding information for the Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Tolt, Raging, Cedar, Green and White rivers, and Issaquah Creek.

The first app to be developed and released by King County, the Flood Warning app provides the most-recent critical flood data from U.S. Geological Survey and National Weather Service - Northwest River Forecast Center.

Users can see current river flows, flood stage data and forecasts, plus real-time flood phases, while hydrographs make it easy to see several days of river data and forecasts.

Development of the app was funded by the King County Flood Control District. Download the free app for Apple products at the Apple App store, or for Android at the Google Play store.

King County also offers free automated Flood Alerts that allow subscribers to receive customized alerts of potential flooding for any or all of King County's six major river systems.

Subscribers can select to receive immediate notification about pending high water by email, text, voicemail, or all three, providing residents with the maximum amount of warning about potential high water.

Sign up for King County Flood Alerts at [www.kingcounty.gov/flood](http://www.kingcounty.gov/flood) or 206-477-4899. 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.

Here are other precautions that residents in flood-prone areas should consider taking before high water comes:

- Buy 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](http://www.floodsmart.gov).
- Monitor 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.
- Minimize flood damage by storing valuables and electronics higher, and by moving vehicles and equipment to high ground before flood waters rise.
- Dispose of hazardous chemicals, such as lawn and gardening herbicides or pesticides, at one of the county's household hazardous waste sites to help reduce harmful contaminants in flood waters. Learn more at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/facilities/hazwaste.asp>.
- Gather, or update, emergency supplies including: a portable radio, flashlight, fresh batteries, emergency cooking equipment, non-perishable food, drinking water, essential medications and a first aid kit.
- In some cases, purchasing sand and sandbags can help to protect property.
- Know emergency phone numbers, identify the safest evacuation routes and establish a meeting place in case family members are separated by rising water.

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.

King County staff mobilizes and begin to gather, analyze and distribute flood warning information so that residents, businesses, property owners and emergency response officials can make important health and safety decisions.

In most locations, the County's flood warning system provides at least two hours advance notice before floodwaters reach damaging levels. The center works in close coordination with the County's Road Services Division to give citizens up-to-date information on road closures.

During river flooding events, King County serves as a clearinghouse for information on flood conditions, operating a recorded message center with continuous updates of river gage readings and flood phases and other related information. Reach the Flood Warning Center at 206-296-8200 or 1-800-945-9263. Interpreter assistance in multiple languages is available.

Questions or assistance with flooding on smaller streams or urban drainage problems can be called in to 206-296-1900 during business hours, or 206-296-8100 after hours or on weekends.

For the eighth consecutive year, King County's 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. As of 2012, King County's high CRS rating saved flood insurance policyholders in unincorporated King County \$830,265, an average of \$578 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 <http://www.kingcountyfloodcontrol.org/>.