



Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security News Release

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Contact: Robert Feeley, (208) 422-3033

Emergency Managers Prepare for Flooding Conditions

(Boise) Emergency managers throughout the state are keeping a close eye on weather and flooding conditions and making preparations for rivers and lakes to exceed their boundaries. This spring has a higher-than-average potential for damaging flooding due to high levels of snowpack in many areas of the state, and several rivers already have reached flood stage.

Some mountain areas of Idaho have seen record or near record amounts of snow, particularly in northern and eastern Idaho. The cooler spring weather has delayed snow from melting, increasing concerns that runoff could be damaging when warmer weather comes. Reservoirs throughout the state are releasing water to make room for the additional runoff.

Idaho rivers now at flood stage include the St. Joe in northern Idaho; the Bruneau and Boise Rivers in southwestern Idaho; and the Snake, Henry's Fork and Portneuf rivers in eastern Idaho. The Kootenai River close to Bonners Ferry is near flood stage, as is Lake Coeur d'Alene. Local and state officials will continue monitoring river and lake levels as they fluctuate with the varying weather and runoff conditions.

The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) has been working closely with local emergency managers as well as the National Weather Service and Army Corps of Engineers to prepare for the flooding. Sandbags and pumps are prepositioned throughout the state and officials have conducted flood preparedness classes in many areas. Several local jurisdictions have requested advanced measures assistance from the Corps of Engineers to help with levee protection activities and the Corps is assisting in flood responses. BHS met with leaders of various state agencies as well as staff from the governor's office to coordinate preparation activities and to provide situational awareness of existing and projected conditions.

Officials recommend that Idahoans who live near flood-prone areas purchase flood insurance to protect belongings. As flood insurance purchases require a 30-day waiting period, residents should not delay. It is important to stay away from the water if flooding occurs since temperatures are low and currents are unpredictable. Citizens should never attempt to drive through floodwaters since even seemingly low water can cause vehicles to lose traction. Citizens should move valuables to high shelves or second stories if flooding is predicted near a residence. Should flooding occur, residents should move to higher ground.

Idaho has developed a flood preparedness booklet for citizens, which is available at <http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/Pages/Preparedness/Hazards/PDF/Idaho%20Flood%20Booklet.pdf>.

“With the amount of water and snow still in the mountains only time will tell if the weather will cooperate or if we will see damaging flooding,” said BHS Director Brigadier General Bill Shawver. “This year certainly has the potential to be a bad flood year but we stand ready to assist local jurisdictions if those concerns become a reality.”

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Note to reporters: The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security is the State of Idaho's emergency management agency. Please note that Idaho BHS is an Idaho-specific agency, and it is not the same thing as the federal Department of Homeland Security. Within the State of Idaho organizational chart, Idaho BHS is aligned under the State of Idaho Military Division.