

Media Advisory – 9:30 p.m., Jan. 7, 2009

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Snohomish County urges residents to watch for urban flooding

In response to an evening notice from the National Weather Service (NWS), Snohomish County emergency management officials urge residents to watch for urban flooding during the next several hours.

Shortly after 8 p.m., the NWS advised officials that rain was falling at a rate of one-half inch per hour in several areas of Snohomish County, increasing the risk of urban flooding.

The Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) still expects significant flooding on all rivers throughout the county, including the Stillaguamish River near Arlington where record flood levels were expected.

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The Stillaguamish River at Arlington will approach nearly 22 feet – a record – near 10:00 a.m. Thursday. At Stanwood, the Stillaguamish River is forecast to crest at 41 feet.

Earlier this evening many residents in low-lying areas – including south of Monroe, portions of Stanwood west of the Pioneer Highway were asked to evacuate on a voluntary basis. Some residents of Arlington have also chosen to find alternate housing. To accommodate residents, the American Red Cross of Snohomish County has opened shelters at The Rock Church, 16891 146th St. SE, Monroe, and Arlington Free Methodist Church, 730 E. Highland Dr. and New View Church, 8028 272nd St. NW, Stanwood.

DEM has not ordered any mandatory evacuations, but has made nearly 10,000 reverse 911 calls informing citizens of rising flood waters in specific neighborhoods.

Major flooding on the Snohomish River will likely close Highway 9 near midnight, causing commuters to find alternate routes to work Thursday and possibly Friday. Water across Highway 2 near Sultan also was posing potential traffic problems Wednesday night.

“Residents are encouraged to continue monitoring conditions near their home and to seek other shelter if needed,” said DEM Director John Pennington. “Under no circumstances should residents drive through or approach flood waters or flooded roads.”

Some parts of Snohomish County have received 6 to 8 inches of rain since Tuesday night. Rain is expected to dissipate during the next 24 hours but continues to cause problems. A number of roads in the county, including Pioneer Highway west of Olson Road, have been closed due to landslides. Nearly three dozen county roads have been closed due to flooding.

Rivers should return to normal levels by Friday.

Residents in low-lying areas – especially those cut off by flood waters in November 2006 and November 2008 – are encouraged to prepare accordingly with supplies or to consider voluntary evacuation until flood waters recede.

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon declared a state of emergency related to flooding events Wednesday night.

The county’s Public Works Department has delivered about 250 cubic yards of sand and about 14,000 sandbags to locations including Darrington, Granite Falls, Stanwood, Oso, Arlington, Gold Bar, Snohomish and Monroe.

Residents needing sand or sandbags should contact their local fire departments for availability. The Evergreen State Fairgrounds also is open for farm animals.

Road flooding should be reported to the municipality where it occurs. Flooding on county roads can be reported to the Public Works Department at 425-388-7500 or contact.pwrm@snoco.org.

Road closure lists and flood updates can be found at www.snoco.org. Additional flooding issues can be reported to Emergency Management at 425-388-5060.

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