



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Distribution:

Prepare yourself for Spring Flood Season

With March upon us and spring snowmelt season quickly approaching, we at the National Weather Service wanted to take this opportunity to remind folks of things they can do to prepare themselves for spring runoff/flooding season.

- Consider buying flood insurance if you don't have an active policy, especially if you live in a flood prone area. Policies generally take effect 30 days after purchase, so the time to get a policy is now. Visit <https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program> for more information from FEMA on the National Flood Insurance Program on options available to you.
- Make sure snow and ice is cleared from drains, window wells, ditches, and culverts under driveways. Creating a flow path for runoff away from your home/property is one of the best ways to prevent flooding or other water drainage related issues.
- Check to make sure your basement sump pump is operable
- Move equipment, hay, and livestock away from low lying areas prone to flooding
- Find out what resources such as sandbags may be available in your community by calling your local County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator
- Anchor any fuel or waste tanks so that in the event of a flood they remain in place

Due to recent very cold temperatures, rivers and streams across the area have rapidly accumulated ice cover. The possibility for river flooding due to ice jams has increased substantially in recent weeks and will remain elevated for weeks to come.

Several area rivers have active ice jams including the Gallatin, Madison, Jefferson, and Missouri. Ice jam flooding can occur rapidly with little to no warning. Those who live or work near these and other area waterways should remain vigilant and be prepared to move equipment and or livestock to higher ground on short notice over the next few weeks as fluctuations in temperatures may lead to ice break-up and new ice formation. More information on Ice Jams can be found here: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/icejam/?wfo=tfx>

Ice Jam Safety Tips:

- NEVER walk out onto an ice covered river, especially if there is evidence of an ice jam
- Avoid the entire area if an ice jam is present as water levels can rise rapidly and unexpectedly
- Be prepared to move to higher ground on short notice should flooding from an ice jam occur
- If there is water over a roadway remember, "Turn around, don't drown!"
- Call Law Enforcement and the National Weather Service to report ice jams

Follow the National Weather Service in Great Falls for current, up-to-date information on our website at www.weather.gov/greatfalls as well as Facebook and Twitter. If you have photos, videos or questions related to ice jams or flooding, please e-mail the Senior Service Hydrologist, Arin Peters at arin.peters@noaa.gov or call 406-727-7671.