



Whatcom County Sheriff's Office

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AUTHORITIES MEETING DAILY TO MONITOR APPROACHING WEATHER SYSTEMS

Whatcom County, WA - Whatcom County will see a significant shift in the weather pattern beginning late Thursday night or early Friday morning. Temperatures will begin to climb slowly and precipitation will fall first in the form of snow, then a brief period of freezing rain followed by all rain. The timing for the freezing rain is estimated to be around 6:00 am or a little later Friday morning. Snow accumulations will be between one to two inches in the Bellingham area with slightly greater amounts at higher elevations.

This weather system is the first of several wet pulses or atmospheric rivers approaching WA between now and New Year's Day. With the ground mostly frozen, melting snow and rain will not be absorbed into the ground. Ditches, culverts, and drains have snow blocking normal water drainage channels. Trapped water can collect on roads or in lower areas including parking lots and backyards. Clearing snow away from culverts and drains can aid in water moving more inherently. Conversely, if temperatures are cold enough, this water could freeze which would lead to more driving hazards. Unsuspecting drivers can also experience hydroplaning.

Daytime highs will approach or exceed 50° in lower areas of the county by Sunday, and snow levels will rise to the six or seven-thousand-foot level. This will increase the amount and rate of snowmelt draining into small streams and the Nooksack River. How fast this drainage occurs is subject to the amount of rain in each weather system along with the temperature. As a precaution, the National Weather Service has stated there is a potential for urban and river flooding for all of western Washington. While there is no threat of flooding at this time, it is important to maintain a heightened state of awareness of these changing conditions through the end of the year. In addition, this precipitation has the potential to increase the chance of landslides and avalanches. Finally, [King Tides](#) are predicted to occur from December 23rd thru December 29th which could be attenuated by certain wind effects. If conditions deteriorate to a level where action is required, additional messages will be distributed through a variety of sources including traditional and social media ([Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Facebook page](#)). The [National Weather Service](#) is also a good source to monitor for forecasts and conditions.

As of Wednesday, December 21st, local authorities are meeting daily and actively monitoring the weather systems and what they might mean for Whatcom County. Residents are asked to clear culverts and drains of any blockages. They are also asked to [sign up for AlertSense](#) and monitor the [National Weather Service](#).

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