



Whatcom County Sheriff's Office

# News Release

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, December 23, 2022

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## **AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO TRACK WEATHER SYSTEMS**

### **Public advised to stay alert, informed**

Whatcom County, WA - Residents of Whatcom County are asked to keep a heightened state of awareness through the middle of next week due to rapidly changing weather conditions that could impact roads, electricity, and the Nooksack River. The combination of these factors necessitates an advisory for heightened awareness.

The [National Weather Service](#) has issued several warnings, watches, and advisories for Whatcom County:

- A Winter Storm Warning is in effect until 2:00 am Saturday due to lingering freezing precipitation.
- A Flood Watch is in effect from late Friday night through late Sunday night due to excessive rainfall.
- A Wind Advisory is in effect Saturday from 1:00 am to 4:00 pm.

This past week's snow storm coupled with a rapid warm-up and excessive rainfall will cause urban flooding in areas where water is trapped while simultaneously melting snow in higher elevations where the snow level will rise to six or seven thousand feet. Southerly winds could gust to 50 mph or slightly higher during this same period increasing the rate of snow melting. The latest Northwest River Forecast Center model has two of three gauges bumping against minor flooding which is a sizable move from earlier models. Determining what the final river height will be is elusive as it will depend on actual temperatures, rainfall, and the rate of snowmelt. These conditions can change rapidly which will impact response times.

With regards to urban flooding, snowfall is blocking or covering many drains, culverts, or natural paths forcing water to pool or move in unorthodox ways. Urban flooding can occur anywhere as it is not tied to streams or rivers. If you have a drain or culvert on your property, clearing the snow will aid in water moving in a more traditional manner.

Landslide and avalanche risk have increased with the melting snow and rainfall. The National Weather Service has not yet put out any landslide information but the [Northwest Avalanche Center](#) currently shows the avalanche danger high for the Cascades backcountry.

(more)

[King Tides](#) will affect Whatcom County's coastal areas beginning Saturday through December 29. Some west

The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office is located at 311 Grand Avenue in Bellingham, Washington.

Office Hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

wind is in the forecast which will create a surge on top of the tide possibly causing some tidal flooding or spray.

The following sites can aid in awareness:

- National Weather Service:  
<https://www.weather.gov/sew/#>  
<https://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=sew> (blue dots lead to river gauge information)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:  
<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=9449424&legacy=1>
- Northwest Avalanche Center:  
<https://nwac.us>
- Sign up for [AlertSense](#)

Whatcom County authorities continue to meet daily to monitor these conditions and their effects. These meetings are coordinated by the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management (DEM). The Whatcom County Sheriff's Office DEM will be issuing updates as needed as well as posting to the [Whatcom County Sheriff's Office Facebook page](#).

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