



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

118 W. Capitol Ave. • Pierre, SD 57501 • (605) 773-3178 • fax: (605) 773-3018 • www.state.sd.us/dps

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, May 27, 2011

CONTACT: Terry Woster, Public Information Officer 605-773-3231

State, Local and Federal Resources Coordinating for Flood Response

PIERRE, S.D. – Officials at the Emergency Operations Center say state, federal, and local resources are working in a coordinated effort to respond to flooding caused by high flows of the Missouri River in the Pierre – Ft. Pierre area.

Record flows into the river from Montana through South Dakota are forcing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase releases from the mainstem dams. Those increased releases will raise water levels.

Here is a brief summary of the situation and information for residents of the impacted areas:

For questions about the situation, or information about flood preparation:

1-866-446-5324, <http://www.breadysd.com/> , www.disasterrecovery.sd.gov

Note: This release is based on projections and the most current information from the Army Corps of Engineers. This is a rapidly-evolving situation that may change as more information becomes available.

Who is threatened?

In the following areas, flooding is projected to begin on Saturday, May 28, and will worsen on June 4-6. Property owners in this area should prepare to evacuate without delay on Saturday.

- In Ft. Pierre: For the area south of the Missouri River bridge and north of Cedar Avenue, everything between the Missouri River and Highway 83. From north of the Missouri River bridge and south of Echo Point, everything between the river and Marion Pastures.
- In Pierre: The residences on either side of Marina Drive, everything that is both east of Washington, near St. Mary's Hospital, and south of Missouri Ave., south of Sully Ave., Fairway Drive and most of southeast Pierre.

When will this begin and for how long will it last?

Water levels will begin to rise late this week, and the water levels could remain at this flood stage into July. **Property owners should make preparations to evacuate their property by this weekend and may not be able to return until mid-summer.**

The Corps plans to increase the water release beginning on Saturday.

The current elevation of the Missouri River at Pierre and Ft. Pierre is 1,430 feet above seas level. That could increase as much as four feet as water flows increase.

On Saturday, May 28, the Corps will increase water flow from the Oahe Dam to 85,000 cubic feet per second (CFS). Subsequent flows will increase as follows:

- 90,000 CFS on Saturday, June 4.
- 95,000 CFS on Sunday, June 5.
- 100,000 CFS on Monday, June 6.

As the snowmelt continues into late June and early July, the water flow will increase to 110,000 CFS and may reach 120,000 CFS.

How are we responding?

- The Red Cross opened a shelter at the Georgia Morse Middle School in Pierre at 7:00 p.m. Thursday evening.
- More than 600,000 sandbags will be arriving this evening (Friday) with more coming in next week. **If you have taken empty sandbags and are not using them, please return them to one of the sandbagging facilities.**
- The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is working on letting contracts to construct temporary levees on both the Pierre and Ft. Pierre sides of the Missouri River.
- The South Dakota National Guard mobilized 300 soldiers to assist with filling and transporting sandbags. The soldiers arrived in the Pierre-Fort Pierre area on Friday.

The public will receive updates on these plans as they are available.

How will flooding impact other river communities in South Dakota?

At this time, the primary area of concern is Pierre and Ft. Pierre. However, this flooding will impact other communities and this information will be released as it is available.

Explanation of the cause

Last night, the Army Corps of Engineers dramatically increased their calculation of water release required from the mainstem dams on the Missouri River. The Corps believes that this increased water release is necessary to avoid overtopping of the spillways.

Huge rainfalls in Wyoming, Montana, and western North and South Dakota over the past nth have exceeded rainfall in a normal year. Because of that, the capacity of the flow that the Corps intended to use for snowmelt has been utilized by the unforeseen moisture.

As a result, the snowmelt will require the Corps to increase water flows to unprecedented levels.

What is coming next?

Huge rains in Wyoming Montana, Dakotas – in some cases, a full year's rainfall in the last month. This used the capacity that had been reserved to accommodate the snowmelt. The snowpack is 135 percent to 140 percent of normal, and it is melting at a later time.