

'Round the Clock flood watch by Army Corps of Engineers

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SEATTLE--The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is responding and prepared for the heavy rain weather system that is taking aim on western Washington.

Engineers at the Reservoir Control Center at the Federal Center South (206-764-6702), are most immediately concerned with already swollen rivers. On a 24-hour watch this weekend, staff closely monitored both the Skokomish River in Mason County and the Satsop River in Grays Harbor County, the areas with the highest likelihood of major flooding due to the intensity of forthcoming cold frontal rains.

The Emergency Operations Center, which dispatches all northwest river basin flood teams activated today from 6am to 4pm (PST). The Chehalis River flood team remains deployed to continue to monitor the situation and assist locals through the night. Sandbags—10,000—were delivered to Grays Harbor County this afternoon for expected overnight flooding on the Satsop River near the town of Elma. The Chehalis River is expected to peak late Monday with other rivers peaking before dawn. The Skagit River flood team members have returned. Other western Washington rivers under flood watch by the Corps, by county: King, Pierce, Lewis, Skagit, Thurston, Jefferson, Clallam, Snohomish and Whatcom. The Reservoir Control Center at Seattle Federal Center South will monitor river levels around the clock, and as long as Corps flood engineers are on-site. The EOC will open again at 6:30 Monday morning.

The Corps of Engineers is authorized by federal law to aid local governments with flood fighting efforts when local and state resources are pushed to their limits.

Public Law 84-99 (33 USCA 701n) authorizes the Corps of Engineers to engage in flood fighting and rescue operations. Local officials may request Corps assistance through county and state officials if the emergency is beyond state and local capabilities. Flood fighting may include:

- temporarily raising the height of levees with sandbags
- strengthening flood control works with armor rock
- evacuating people and livestock when necessary
- providing equipment of plant and supplies, such as sandbags, plastic sheeting, etc.
- providing 24-hour technical assistance during the event
- removing logs and debris.