

Corps ramps up emergency operations, flood teams in advance of today's wet weather

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SEATTLE -- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers emergency management teams have been alerted and have begun preparations for the heavy wet weather that will arrive this evening in Western Washington.

The Seattle District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has also activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate all Corps activities. The Seattle District Reservoir Control Center (RCC) will go into 24-hour operation at 6 p.m. tonight

"What we have coming in tonight is a classic Pineapple Express and even if the storm doesn't pack the punch we think it will, flooding is very likely to occur," said Larry Schick, Seattle District meteorologist.

According to Paul Komoroske, chief of Emergency Management at the Corps' office in downtown Seattle, besides the rising river levels, the incoming storm brings debris with it that can affect levees, block drainages and cause roads and areas to flood.

"The Corps has a seasoned team of emergency responders that assist in floods and natural disasters," said Komoroske.

Currently, advance teams of flood fight personnel from the Corps will be in Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom and other western Washington counties tomorrow. They have been requested by local officials to provide technical assistance. The Corps is monitoring the situation throughout Western Washington. "We are also monitoring the Naches River near Naches, Wash.," said Doug Weber, natural disaster manager for the Corps' Seattle District.

"In most areas, we expect to see some significant rainfall and possibly significant flooding," said Schick.

The National Weather Service issues flood watches and warnings and should be consulted for that information.

For more information on the Corps, and up-to-date river forecasts, go to www.nws.usace.army.mil and click on Rivers and Reservoirs or call the RCC at (206) 764-6702. Information on Emergency Management is also available at (206) 764-3406.

