

Public Safety / Public Alert – River Watch

Water levels will remain high for the coming days

NB

April 27, 2019

FREDERICTON (GNB) – The following advisory was issued today by the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization (NBEMO), River Watch 2019:

Water will remain high in the St. John River basin for the coming days. People should continue to be vigilant and avoid any activities on the water, as currents are still strong and there is significant debris in the water.

Flood level five-day forecasts are available online for the [Upper Saint John River](#) and the [lower part of the Saint John River](#).

Residents should avoid contact with floodwater if possible, as the water may contain sewage from overflowing sewage systems and agricultural and industrial waste, which poses health risks such as sickness and infections.

Floodwaters may cause community sewage systems to become overwhelmed and this can lead to sewage backing up into homes or businesses.

Grand Lake operation

Teams were deployed on Grand Lake near Waterborough on Friday night to conduct a search and rescue operation after a call was received around 10:30 p.m. indicating that three distress signal flares were seen in the vicinity of Sypher's Cove. Four boats participated in the search.

Operations were suspended overnight due to poor weather. Military air search and rescue was also called in but could not commence searching due to conditions.

The search resumed before dawn on Saturday morning, and has since concluded. Nothing was found and there are no reports of missing people.

Residents can now report damages

Residents affected by flooding can report damage by calling 1-888-298-8555 or by [registering online](#).

The Damage Report Line program allows residents, tenants, small businesses and not-for-profit organizations to receive information and register their flood-related damage.

The New Brunswick Damage Report line is available to receive calls between 8 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Road closures

The Trans-Canada Highway from Exit 306 (Oromocto) to Exit 423 (River Glade) is now fully closed and will remain so until it is safe to reopen, the water has receded, debris has been removed and the road has been inspected.

A list of the latest road closures [is available online](#). Just because water is no longer covering a road does not mean it is safe for travel. The public is asked to remain patient.

Drivers are reminded that it is an offence to move or drive around barricades, and offenders will be charged.

Drivers should avoid roads covered by water. Water may be deeper than it appears and may conceal sinkholes or other damage and debris.

The My511 mobile application allows users to receive road condition and incident notifications about highway segments they select.

Railway lines

Railway lines are in use and trains may be travelling outside of their regularly scheduled times due to operations related to the flood. Everyone should keep clear of train tracks at all times. Trespassing is dangerous, illegal and can impede flood response efforts.

New Brunswickers can help

As flooding continues, the government has brought in additional resources to ensure that everyone remains safe. Communities across the province are encouraged to assist as efforts shift to the recovery phase in the days and weeks ahead.

People are encouraged to step up, reach out and help as they are able. Those who can safely do so are asked to contact neighbours to see if they need assistance. Residents can also ask their local emergency measures organization or local authorities what is needed and how they can help.

People should follow authoritative sources such as NBEMO or the provincial government on Facebook and Twitter, and share information from these sources on their social media accounts. Residents are also asked to heed the advice of local authorities including police, fire departments and local municipalities.

Canadian Armed Forces support

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are active in a number of communities, conducting tasks in support of flood response operations.

The Forces' priorities are to protect lives, assist with preparing sandbags, protect critical infrastructure, conduct wellness checks in communities, and support vulnerable residents.

Forces members need to move from place to place as part of their operations, based on where the needs are the greatest. Those needs are being defined with local and provincial emergency management officials.

Canadian Red Cross

The Canadian Red Cross has established reception centres at Centre Sainte-Anne, 715 Priestman St. in Fredericton and at the Carleton Community Centre, 120 Market Place in Saint John.

To date, 420 households (1,052 people) have registered with the Red Cross.

Residents who are affected by flooding and do not have access to alternative accommodations (with neighbours, friends or family) can contact the Canadian Red Cross at 1-800-863-6582 between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Donations can be made to the Canadian Red Cross to support those affected by the flood. Funds will be used for immediate and ongoing relief efforts, long-term recovery, resiliency and preparedness. Anyone interested in donating can call 1-800-418-1111 or visit www.redcross.ca.

NB Power update

NBEMO is working closely with NB Power and the Department of Public Safety's chief electrical inspector. If rising water contacts or is expected to contact electrical facilities, including receptacles, call 1-800-663-6272 for an emergency disconnect.

Once the water has receded, NB Power have a reconnection process to ensure residents, their neighbours and properties are safe.

Currently, 203 NB Power customers have their services disconnected due to flooding.

Sandbags available

Sand and sandbags continue to be available at locations across the province for residents who require them. An updated list of locations that have [sand and sandbags is available online](#).

Carbon monoxide and fire safety

During a flood, the risk of fire or carbon monoxide exposure is greatly increased.

People should never use generators, pumps or other fuel-powered equipment indoors, and should place powered equipment at least four metres from structures.

In the event of a power outage, never use carbon-based fuels such as kerosene, gas or fuel oil indoors to heat or cook.

People should ensure their home is equipped with functioning battery-powered smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur quickly. Anyone who believes they have been affected by carbon monoxide poisoning should go outside immediately and then go to the nearest hospital or call 911.

Report issues with water

Residents can report issues related to increased water levels or flooding at any time by calling 1-800-561-4034. In case of emergency, call 911.

For recorded River Watch water levels, people may call 1-888-561-4048.

Well safety

People with wells that are currently under floodwaters should not use their well water. If well water has a persistent odour or discolouration, or if residents believe it has been affected by chemicals such as furnace oil, gasoline or agricultural chemicals, it should not be used for any purpose, even if it has been boiled. More information about well water safety [is available online](#).

Residents concerned about the safety of their well water should contact the nearest regional office of the Department of Environment and Local Government for further information.

Tips for dealing with stress in an emergency

It is normal for residents to feel anxious about their own safety during an emergency situation, even if they are not directly affected.

If in crisis, there are several 24-hour emergency numbers that are available to help, including CHIMO helpline (1-800-667-5005); Tele-Care (811); and Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868). More information and resources [are available online](#).

Information to residents

People are reminded to:

- Avoid boating, kayaking or other water activities this time of year as currents are strong and carries debris. As well, people should stay away from the edge of the river while walking.
- Read helpful tips, the latest forecasts and public advisories by [visiting the River Watch website](#), or by following the Emergency Measures Organization on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

The River Watch program is a joint effort involving the Department of Environment and Local Government, the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization of the Department of Public Safety, and NB Power. Other partners include watershed groups, and federal, provincial and state agencies involved in monitoring and forecasting the water flow in the province's rivers and streams.

Updates on information related to the potential for flooding or ice jams, including 24/7 emergency updates, [is available online](#).

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