

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

UPDATE: Flood Warning – Lillooet River, Squamish River/Cheakamus River

Flood Watch – South Coast and Vancouver Island

High Streamflow Advisory – Sumas, Lower Fraser tributaries and Central Coast

Issued: 11:00 AM January 31, 2024

The River Forecast Centre is maintaining a Flood Warning for:

- Lillooet River and tributaries
- Squamish River including tributaries including Cheakamus River

The River Forecast Centre is maintaining a Flood Watch for:

- South Coast including Howe Sound, Sunshine Coast, Sea-to-Sky and North Shore Mountains
- Fraser Valley – North including tributaries from Port Coquitlam to Harrison
- Vancouver Island

The River Forecast Centre is maintaining a High Streamflow Advisory for:

- Fraser Valley – East, including the Sumas River (DOWNGRADED) and the Fraser Canyon tributaries

Weather Synopsis:

The final in a series of storms is now underway on the BC coast. Total rainfall since Friday has ranged from 70 to 500+mm, with many areas receiving 100 to 250 mm. In addition, extremely warm seasonal temperatures and high freezing levels has led to significant snowmelt, with 75 to 150 mm of snowmelt being observed in many of Automated Snow Weather Stations over the past 3 days. Rainfall overnight has been in the 15 to 45 mm range over the Howe Sound and North Shore Mountains, and 15 to 65 mm over central and northern Vancouver Island. Rainfall from this final storm is forecast to continue through Wednesday and Thursday, with moderate to heavy rainfall expected across areas of Vancouver Island and the South Coast. Temperatures are expected to warm during this period, with on-going additional runoff coming from snowmelt. Rainfall is expected to ease on Friday, with cooling temperatures and drier weather into the weekend.

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River Conditions:

Flows in most areas have experienced a reprieve from high flows on Tuesday. Flows are beginning to rise from the onset of rainfall Tuesday night.

A summary of conditions:

Squamish River and tributaries (including Cheakamus River) – current flows at the Water Survey of Canada Gauge near Brackendale (08GA022) has dropped to 780 m³/s and is has begun rising. Flows are expected to rise through Wednesday through Friday with on-going potential for flooding expected over this period.

Lillooet River and tributaries – current flow on the Lillooet River near Pemberton (08MG005) have dropped to 280 m³/s. Flows are expected to rise through Wednesday through Friday with on-going potential for flooding expected over this period.

Vancouver Island – flows remain elevated in lake-driven systems, including the Sproat River (and downstream to the Somass River) and Cowichan River. These rivers remain particularly vulnerable to flooding over the Wednesday through Saturday period due to the cumulative effect of past and current storms, and on-going snowmelt. In other areas of Vancouver Island rivers are expected to experience another period of high flows on Wednesday and Thursday with on-going potential for flooding.

South Coast – In other areas of the South Coast, including Howe Sound, North Shore Mountains, Sea-to-Sky, and Fraser Valley – North, rivers are expected to experience another period of high flows on Wednesday and Thursday with on-going potential for flooding.

Sumas River – flows have dropped significantly since the weekend. Another rise in flows is possible into Thursday. Forecasted rainfall patterns are currently projected limited rain into the Fraser Valley and south into the Nooksack River. While hazards of Nooksack River overflow and high runoff from within the Sumas River watershed are low in the current forecast, there remains on-going risks if the rainfall patterns shift from what is currently forecast.

While some regions may experience declining flows on Tuesday, on-going hazards for increased flows are expected on Wednesday and Thursday, and potentially into Friday, as the final atmospheric river brings continued rainfall and snowmelt to the region.

There remains uncertainty over the amounts of rainfall that will occur and the locations of heaviest rainfall. Elevated flood hazards may be possible in nearby areas, particularly if the storm tracks or patterns change from what is currently forecast.

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Fast-flowing rivers pose increased risk to life safety. The [River Forecast Centre](#) continues to monitor the conditions and will provide updates as conditions warrant.

For information on how to prepare for flood hazards, visit [PreparedBC](#).

BC River Forecast Centre

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A **High Streamflow Advisory** means that river levels are rising or expected to rise rapidly, but that no major flooding is expected. Fast-flowing bodies of water increase risk to life safety. Minor flooding in low-lying areas is possible.

A **Flood Watch** means that river levels are rising and will approach or may exceed bankfull. Flooding of areas adjacent to affected rivers may occur.

A **Flood Warning** means that river levels have exceeded bankfull or will exceed bankfull imminently, and that flooding of areas adjacent to the rivers affected will result.