

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

High Streamflow Advisory – North Coast, Central Coast, Northern Vancouver Island

Issued: 2:00 PM September 20, 2024

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

- North Coast, including tributaries and smaller streams around Stewart, Gitlaxt'aamiks (New Aiyansh), Terrace, Prince Rupert, Kitimat, and other coastal communities, and Haida Gwaii
- Central Coast including tributaries and smaller streams around Bella Coola, Rivers Inlet, and other coastal communities
- Northern Vancouver Island including tributaries and smaller streams around Port Hardy

Weather Synopsis:

As the fall storm season begins, a sequence of atmospheric rivers is predicted to arrive on the B.C. coast over the upcoming weekend and into next week. Current weather modelling indicates that the first atmospheric river will arrive on the Central Coast on Saturday morning (September 21), followed by a second, stronger atmospheric river on Monday morning (September 23) likely focused on the North Coast and potentially continuing into Tuesday night. Areas of highest rainfall accumulation may receive totals well over 100 mm and possibly over 200 mm. While the storms are expected to be centered on the North and Central coasts, they may graze the northernmost portion of Vancouver Island as well.

River Conditions:

The upcoming storms mark a substantial shift in weather and streamflow conditions as summer comes to an end. Current river levels are very low in many of the areas expected to be impacted by the storms. The sudden arrival of heavy precipitation and higher flows is considered to be a particularly notable risk due to the expected rapid change from lower flow conditions as well as seasonal hunting, fishing, and recreational activity on the coast, which may mean that unusually high numbers of people are in and around coastal streams.

It is also important to note that streamflow impacts may be especially severe in smaller streams, many of which are not gauged. While larger river systems are generally at seasonally low flows right now and therefore have a substantial amount of channel capacity to absorb precipitation runoff, smaller streams may respond much more rapidly and dramatically, with higher flows relative to their channel size.

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Streamflow increases may begin as early as Saturday, and flows may continue rising for several days as the series of storms continues. Peak flows in most systems are anticipated to occur early to mid-next week.

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.