

Increased Flood Risk Environmental Protection Measures

Periods of Flood Risk May Occur in B.C.

During the late spring there may be an increased risk of flooding in various areas of the province. The ministry provides flood forecasts and advice after analyzing factors including the depth of snow pack and areas of the province affected.

When there are widespread heavy snow conditions the River Forecast Centre may forecast well above normal spring runoff in river basins and a potential for flooding in some areas. Whether or not significant flooding occurs on major river systems will depend primarily on the weather during snowmelt in May and June, and when and how rapidly snowmelt occurs.

The public can review current flooding advice in the ministry's Snowpack and Water Supply Bulletins which are available at the following web address: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/rfc/>.

Appropriate Steps Should be Taken

The ministry's Flood Emergency Preparedness and Response web site (http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/flood/emergency.html) states that "unless appropriate steps are taken to protect ourselves and the environment, flooding can cause many serious problems including property damage, loss of land due to erosion, serious health hazards and in extreme cases even death. Flood water can also be heavily contaminated with

sewage and other pollutants such as pesticides, oil or chemical waste."

This web site also contains information on topics such as personal flood preparedness, prevention and recovery; floodwater hazards; sandbag dike construction, as well as the Flood Planning and Response Guide for British Columbia.

Special Procedures for Contaminated Sites

Contaminated sites and associated remediation works located in floodplains are subject to an increased risk during periods of flooding. Please ensure that appropriate measures are taken at these sites to protect human health and safety and prevent spills and pollution in the event of a flood. Such measures may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Reducing or eliminating inventories of materials such as dangerous goods, hazardous wastes, fuels, products, liquids, and materials that may be dissolved or leached by water that may spill or cause pollution in the event of a flood. Inventory levels should be reduced to the minimum necessary to maintain operations during the increased flood risk period, and materials should only be delivered by suppliers on an as-needed basis. Wherever possible, materials should be temporarily moved to other sites located in areas not subject to flooding until the flood risk has subsided.

2) Ensuring that an Emergency Response Plan is in place, up-to-date and ready to be implemented on short notice. This includes having a call-out procedure and a contact list with appropriate personnel who are available on a 24-hour/7-day per week basis ready to take immediate response measures in the event of a flood emergency. The B.C. Guidelines for Industry Emergency Response Plans may be accessed at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/eemp/resources/guidelines/bc.htm>.

Arrangements should be made in advance to transport materials to higher ground, shut down or secure operations as necessary to prevent spills and implement all other measures necessary to prevent pollution in anticipation of receiving short notice that flooding is imminent;

- 3) Retaining the services of qualified professionals where necessary;
- 4) Regularly monitoring the local media and checking weather warnings, and flood watch notifications. Please consult the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) Internet site (<http://www.pep.bc.ca>), and the ministry Internet site (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/env>) for flood advisories;

5) Calling the Environmental Emergency Reporting Hotline at 1-800-663-3456 (24-hour) if an environmental emergency occurs at your site, including one caused by flooding.

Also, please note that the *Environmental Management Act's* Spill Reporting Regulation (http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/E/EnvMgmt/263_90.htm) requires you to report spills immediately in accordance with the Regulation and take all reasonable and practical action to stop, contain and minimize the effects of the spill; and

6) Taking all other measures necessary to protect human health and safety and prevent spills and pollution.

Additional Information

Other web sites which contain useful information regarding floods include:

- Provincial Emergency Program
<http://www.pep.bc.ca>
- British Columbia Flood Plan
http://www.pep.bc.ca/hazard_plans/BC_Flood_Plan_2007.pdf

For more information, contact the Environmental Management Branch at site@gov.bc.ca.