



Town of Estes Park
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Don't wait for an emergency to prepare your property for runoff

Spring runoff is here, and as the snow pack begins to melt, residents in low-lying areas should take action now before it's too late. While the Town will respond to public safety emergencies, it cannot divert resources to assist residents with private property protection. It is every citizen's responsibility to consider how risks on his or her property affect neighbors up and downstream. Property owners must make the following considerations:

1. Ensure privately-owned culverts are clear of debris and large enough to accommodate peak flows. The water will otherwise back up or move to another channel, and may cause problems. Sand bags or hydro barriers can be used for temporary containment at undersized culverts (see #3 below).
2. Stabilize undercut and unstable river banks and reduce blockage potential.
 - a. Cut down unstable trees (leave stump and roots in place) that could fall and block water flow along the channel or at downstream bridges and culverts.
 - b. Leave existing roots and small woody and vegetative debris on riverbanks to reduce flow velocities and resist bank erosion.
 - c. Apply quick-growing seed mixes.
 - d. Selectively remove problematic debris from river; permits required.
 - e. Permits for all work in the floodplain are required. In Estes Park town limits, call 970-577-3726; in Larimer County, call 970-498-5703. Mitigation advice is available during the permit process.
3. Prevent or reduce flood water damage using sand bags or hydro barriers.
 - a. Place bags next to buildings to divert water or to stabilize banks, never in the river channels.
 - b. Local hardware and lumber stores sell sand bags and hydro barriers.
4. Sump pumps must be discharged back into the ground or storm drain -- never down the drain into sanitary sewer. This has the potential to overwhelm sewer plants.
5. Prepare before the water rises. Do not risk your own safety around swift-flowing water. Keep pets and children away from moving water; it is deceptively strong and you may be swept away.
6. Sign up for free emergency notifications on your cell phone, work phone, text message, email, home phone, etc. Choose the locations you wish to be contacted about (within the boundaries of Larimer County). Visit www.leta911.org or call 970-962-2170.

Runoff conditions are monitored around-the-clock, and residents are asked to report potential problems such as threatened infrastructure, the movement of stream channels and streams flowing out of their banks to the non-emergency line at the Estes Park Police Department, 970-586-4000. It is not necessary to report normal rises in water level, which are to be expected during runoff. Always call 9-1-1 in a life safety emergency. For numerous resources and information sources, visit www.estes.org/riversandruff.

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