

**CITY OF POCATELLO**  
**FLOOD RESPONSE**  
**PLAN**



**EMERGENCY**  
**INSTRUCTIONS**  
**DURING A FLOOD**  
**EVENT**

## **FORWARD**

**Flood incidents can endanger human life, cause extensive property damage and result in significant harm to the environment. Efficient and coordinated response to flood incidents demands a well written emergency response plan. This flood plan was developed to assist this community in dealing with flood hazards that exist locally. This plan defines who does what, when, where and how they will do it. By training on, and following this plan, first responders can reduce the risk of danger to themselves and the general public, and lessen the likelihood and extent of damage to property and the environment.**

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**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

**City of Pocatello Mayor's Office**

**City of Pocatello Police Department**

**City of Pocatello Fire Department**

**Bannock County EOC**

**United States Army Corps of Engineers**

**National Weather Service**

**City of Pocatello Building Department**

**City of Pocatello Public Works Director**

## **PURPOSE**

1. Purpose of this plan is to specify methods for early recognition floods and dissemination of warnings which are accurate, timely, and reliable; and
2. To prevent injury and loss of life due to flooding and flood related causes.
3. To reduce public and private property damages from flooding and flood related causes.
4. To initiate post flood actions.
5. To develop community awareness of the flood hazard and to prepare for the accurate and timely provision of information during flood emergencies.

## **PLANNING FACTORS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

1. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps have been used to identify flood prone areas along the Portneuf River and its tributaries. These maps delineate 100-year and 500-year flood boundaries.
2. Serious flooding can occur as a result of rainfall, snow and ice melt, ice jams and releases from Chesterfield Reservoir.
3. The resources of industry, city, county, state or federal government, separately or in combination, may be required to cope with the situation.
4. Response to a major flooding incident will require a high degree of interagency cooperation and communication.
5. Mutual aid between agencies will be encouraged.
6. There are a number of stream flow gauges installed in the area to provide real time data in accordance with stream flows. These can be found at:  
[http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv?site\\_no=13075500](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/uv?site_no=13075500)  
<http://www.portneufriver.org/>
7. Miscellaneous flooding may occur in the City at any time of the year. In the event of miscellaneous flooding, the residents may choose evacuation, sheltering in place or sandbagging as protection strategies.

## **HOW THE PLAN WORKS**

This section provides information about how flood response should work.

1. The City of Pocatello 911 dispatch center will serve as the 24-hour contact point for all flooding incidents.
2. The National Weather Service issues flood warnings, flash flood watches, flash flood warnings.
3. When the 911 dispatch center receives reports of flooding, they will notify the appropriate department, who will then respond and assess the situation and begin required actions.

## **WHO'S IN CHARGE**

1. Within the City of Pocatello, each department will have responsibilities as follows.
  - Public Works – All decisions within the Public Right of Way
  - Fire – Private property and evacuations
  - Police – Private property and evacuations
2. The first emergency responder at the scene is responsible for evaluating and reporting the situation to 911 dispatch. First actions, at the scene, should be to protect others from being exposed to flood waters.
3. Public Warning may be accomplished thru a variety of means.
  - Media – Television, Radio
  - National Weather Service Alerts
  - Emergency Vehicles with Public Address System
  - Door to Door
  - Reverse 911
4. A command post shall be established and properly marked with either an Orange Traffic Control Flag or a flashing light. 911 dispatch should be notified of the Command Post location.
5. All evacuations will be managed by Law Enforcement, and assisted by Fire and Emergency Medical Services.
6. A Public Information Officer will be designated at the command post to provide updates to the general public, media and other agencies.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AMONGST RESPONDERS**

The Incident Commander shall be the first responder on the incident. The Incident Commander shall set up all communications networks with all departments and agencies participating in the event. Special flood emergency communications frequencies will be established during the event.

## **PUBLIC PROTECTION STRATEGIES**

Sandbagging, Flood Proofing, Evacuation and Sheltering In Place are the principle methods used for public protection.

1. Sandbagging – Is a simple, but effective, way to reduce or prevent exposure to flood damage.
2. Flood Proofing – Is building or remodeling using materials and methods that will prevent or minimize flood damage.
3. Evacuation – Is relocating threatened populations to a safer area.
4. Sheltering In Place – Is where there is not time to evacuate, or flooding is expected to be minimal.

## **TESTING AND UPDATING THE PLAN**

1. Tabletop exercises or field simulation exercises should be conducted to train personnel on the use of this plan. Each exercise should be followed by a critique of the plan. The plan may be revised based on the critique of the exercise or a real event.
2. Updating the plan – All revised pages will be provided to departments and other agencies, whom are listed on the plan. It is the responsibility of the plan holder to keep all copies of the plan current.



## **CITIZENS INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLASH FLOODING**

**FLASH FLOODS**: Flash flood waves moving at incredible speeds, can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges and scour out new channels. Killing walls of water can reach heights of 10 to 20 feet. You won't always have warning that these deadly, sudden floods are coming.

When a **FLASH FLOOD WATCH** is issued for your area:

1. Listen to area radio and television stations for possible flash flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress, from the National Weather Service and public safety agencies.
2. Be prepared to move out of danger's way at a moment's notice. Know where high ground is and how to get there quickly.
3. If you are on a road, watch for flooding at highway dips, bridges and low areas.
4. Watch for signs (thunder, lightning) of distant heavy rainfall.

When a **FLASH FLOOD WARNING** is issued for your area, or the moment you first realize that a flash flood is imminent, act quickly to save yourself and your family. You may have only seconds.

1. If you are caught outside or inside the house by suddenly rising waters, move to the second floor and, if necessary, to the roof. Take warm clothing, a flashlight and a portable radio with you. Then wait for help; don't try to swim to safety. Rescue teams will be looking for you.
2. Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes streambeds, dips, low spots, canyons, washes, etc. Move to high ground as fast as you can.
3. Avoid already flooded and high velocity flow areas. Don't try to outrace a flood. If you can see or hear it coming, move to higher ground as fast as you can. Do not attempt to cross a flowing stream on foot where water is above your knees.
4. If driving, do not drive where water is over the roads. The roadbed may not be intact under the water. Don't try to drive through flooded areas.
5. If the vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground — rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and its occupants and sweep them away.
6. Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
7. Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
8. During any flood emergency, stay tuned to your NOAA weather radio, or commercial radio or television station. Information from these sources may save your life.

## **CITIZENS INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLOODING**

### **1. Before the Flood:**

- a. Find out how many feet your property is above or below possible flood levels, so when predicted flood levels are broadcast, you can determine if you may be flooded. Ask for the location of the nearest safe area.
- b. Keep a stock of food that requires little or no cooking and refrigeration; electric power may be interrupted.
- c. Keep a portable radio, emergency cooking equipment, lights and flashlights in working order.
- d. Keep first aid and critical medical supplies (prescriptions, insulin, etc.) at hand.
- e. Keep your automobile fueled; if electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.
- f. Keep materials like sandbags, sand, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber handy for emergency waterproofing.
- g. Do not stack sandbags around the outside wall of your home to keep water out of your basement. Water can seep down anyway and the pressure it puts on the walls and under the floors can cause structural damage.
- h. Bring outdoor possessions inside the house or tie them down securely.

### **2. When you receive a Flood Warning:**

- a. Store drinking water in closed, clean containers, bathtubs, sinks, etc. Water service may be interrupted.
- b. If flooding is likely and time permits, move essential items, valuable papers, jewelry and furniture to upper floors of your house or higher elevations.
- c. If forced or advised to leave your home, move to a safe area before access is cut off by floodwater.
- d. Shut off all electric circuits at the fuse panel or disconnect all electrical appliances. Shut off the water service and gas valves in your home.

### **3. During the Flood:**

- a. Avoid areas subject to a sudden flooding.
- b. If you are caught in the house by rising floodwaters, move to the second floor, and if necessary, to the roof. Take warm clothes, a flashlight and portable radio with you. Wait for help. Don't try to swim to safety.
- c. When outside the house, try to avoid flooded areas and do not attempt to cross a flowing stream where water is above your knees.
- d. Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road. You can be stranded and trapped.
- e. If your vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground. Many people drown while trying to rescue their car



# **SANDBAG CONSTRUCTION**

## **Sandbag Construction**

The use of sandbags is a simple, but effective, way to prevent or reduce floodwater damage. Properly filled and spaced sandbags can act as a barrier to divert moving water around, instead of through buildings. Sandbag construction does not guarantee a watertight seal, but is satisfactory for use in most situations. Sandbags can also be used successfully to prevent overtopping of levee streams and for training current flow to specific areas.

Untied sandbags are recommended for most situations. Tied sandbags should be used only for special situations when pre-filling and stockpiling may be required for specific purposes such as filling holes, holding objects in position or to form barriers, backed by supportive planks. Tied sandbags are generally easier to handle and stockpile, however, sandbag filling operations can, generally, best be accomplished, at or near the placement site and tying of the bags would be a waste of valuable time and effort. If the bags are to be pre-filled at a distant location, due consideration must be given to transportation vehicles and placement site access.

The most commonly used bags are untreated burlap sacks, available at feed or hardware stores. Empty bags can be stockpiled for emergency use and will be serviceable for several years if properly stored. Filled bags of earth material will deteriorate quickly.

A heavy bodied or sandy soil is most desirable for filling sandbags, but any usable material, at or near the site, has definite advantages. Course sand could leak out through the weave in the bag, to prevent this, double-bag the material. Gravelly or rocky soils are generally poor choices because they are too permeable to effectively retard water flow.

Two people can easily construct sandbag barriers, as most individuals have the physical capabilities to carry or drag a sandbag weighing approximately 30 pounds.

## **How to Fill a Sandbag**

Filling sandbags is a two -person operation. One member of the team should place the empty bag between, or slightly in front of, widespread feet with arms extended. The throat of the bag is folded to form a collar and held with the hands, in a position that will enable the other team member to empty a rounded shovel full of material into the open end. The person holding the sack should be standing with knees slightly flexed and head and face as far away from the action of the shovel as practical. It is very important that both people wear gloves.

The person shoveling should carefully release the rounded shovel fill of soil, into the throat of the bag. Haste in this operation can result in undue spillage and added work. The use of safety goggles is desirable and sometimes necessary.

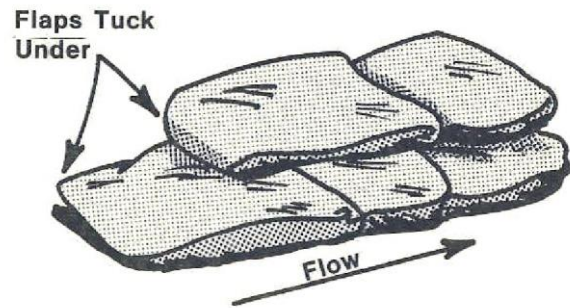


For large-scale operations, filling sandbags can be expedited by using bag-holding racks, metals or plastic funnels and power loading equipment. However, the special equipment required is not always available during an emergency.

Bags should not be filled more than half full or less than one third of their capacity.

### Placement

Remove any debris from the area where bags are to be placed. Fold the open end of the unfilled portion of the bag to form a triangle. (If tied bags are used flatten, or flare the tied end.)



Place the ½ filled bags lengthwise and parallel to the direction of flow, keeping the unfilled portion under the weight of the sack.

Place succeeding bags on top, offsetting by ½ bag length of the previous bag and stamp into place, to eliminate voids and form a tight seal.

Stagger the joint connections when multiple layers are necessary. For unsupported layers, over three courses high, use pyramid placement method.

### Pyramid Placement Method

Pyramid placement is used to increase the height of sandbag protection.

Place the sandbags to form a pyramid by alternating header courses (bags placed crosswise) and stretcher courses (bags placed lengthwise).

Stamp each bag in place, overlap sacks, maintain staggered join placement and tuck under any loose ends.

