

Happy Holidays. We hope you are enjoying this holiday season. With it comes the wet weather. As we all know, December ushered in the rainy season, so here's an update of what the City is doing to safeguard against the wet weather and what you can do to prepare your home and family.

## **Keeping Storm Drains Clear**

Our Public Works department has been planning for the start of the rain for many months. To maintain about 32 miles of storm drain pipeline and 15 miles of creeks and open ditches, our crews continuously work to keep storm drains clear of debris that can slow down water flow or completely clog a line.

Even with all the preparation, the work of our dedicated Public Works crew does not end. When significant rain is forecasted, our crews check drainage inlets throughout town even more frequently to make sure they are not covered with leaves or other debris. And during heavy rain events, our staff constantly monitor locations that flooded in the past. It is not uncommon to see one of our crewmembers wading thigh-deep in the water to clear a drain.

It is important to make sure nothing goes into the inlets other than water. Leaves, dirt, and trash don't just pollute our waterways all the way to the ocean. Dirt can speed erosion of the pipes and when leaves and other debris clog the pipes, storm water can flow into the streets, creating dangerous driving conditions. Excessive debris may also collect in the creeks and create a blockage so water could potentially flood someone's property.

Many thanks to the volunteers of the annual Foss Creek Clean-Up, who removed 1,520 pounds of trash this year! Our gratitude also goes to the Center of Environmental Stewardship, which removed an additional 210 cubic yards of invasive or dead vegetation.

There are a lot of drain inlets in the City and we cannot check the all. This is where the City's residents can really help. If everyone checks the inlets near their home or business, it can help to reduce some of the localized nuisance flooding. If you see downed trees and drainage issues, please call the Utility Response Hotline at (707)431-7000 or (855)755-6586.

## **Monitoring Water Levels**

During heavy rain events, our crews also monitor the water levels of the detention basins, Foss Creek, and the Russian River. We can tell if a flooding event is possible based on several factors: when rainwater get to a certain level, the weather forecast, and previous rain events.

The City will always notify our community if flooding may be possible. If we expect flooding to occur, we will inform you via the City website, social media, and the local news media of the steps you should take to keep safe. It is also the responsibility of every community member to know if he or she lives or works in an area that has flooded before, and to take proper precautions.

## **Tips to Prepare for Winter Weather**

Here are some tips to help you prepare for the winter weather.

- Clean leaves and debris out of gutters and away from storm drains.
- Trim shrubbery away from siding to prevent insect and moisture damage.
- Replace weather stripping and caulk that has lost contact with surfaces.
- Keep copies of important documents in a safe place and in a water-resistant container. Consider a safe-deposit box for critical documents or items.

- Store emergency supplies and contact information in a handy location at work and home. Consider storing some emergency supplies in your car as well; these items should include:
  - Warm clothing, including hats and gloves
  - Blankets
  - Non-perishable food (such as nuts, trail mix and power bars) and drinking water
  - Reflective triangles and brightly colored cloth to make your vehicle more visible
  - Car charger for your cell phone

For more safety tips, go to: <https://ci.healdsburg.ca.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=238>. In addition, download our emergency-preparedness brochure if you don't have a copy handy: <https://ci.healdsburg.ca.us/460/Emergency-Services>.

I also want to take this time to thank all of you again for working with the City during the Kincade Fire. The City has a lot to be thankful for this season. Your City staff wish you a happy and safe holiday.