



Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management
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PUBLIC ADVISORY #1

Friday 29th December, 2017 – 10:30 a.m.

ODPM advises the public of safety precautions for inclement weather for the next 12-24 hours and TTMET's Riverine Flood Alert

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), as the lead coordinator of disaster management, is in contact with all first responder agencies (the Municipal Corporations of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, TT Fire Service, TT Defence Force, TT Police Service, Emergency Support Functions of the National Emergency Operation Centre and Strategic Services Agency–Fusion Centre) to ensure immediate assistance can be rendered if called upon due to any adverse weather impact.

Regional Corporations of the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government have advised citizens in the following areas to take all measures to protect their life and property, as inclement weather conditions continue, these are: Barrackpore, El Carmen, St. Helena, Madras Road and Oropune areas.

Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service's (TTMET) advises citizens that due to the passage of a surface trough of low pressure, Trinidad and Tobago will continue to experience gusty winds, heavy showers or thundershowers, localized street or flash flooding in heavy or prolonged downpours and landslides or landslips in areas so prone for the next 12-24 hours.

The Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service has also issued a Riverine Flood Alert for Trinidad, having regard to current rainfall activity, as well as forecast rainfall expected over the next 24 hours. As opposed to Street and Flash Flooding, Riverine Flooding is more prolonged and widespread.

Although the nation's major rivers remained contained at this time, information from the Water Resources Agency indicate that water levels are significantly high. With expected run-off into the basins from current rainfall as well as additional rainfall anticipated today into tomorrow, water levels in the major rivers are expected to continue to rise eventually to threshold levels.

Citizens in general, and those residing along the Caroni River Basin in particular, are asked to be on the alert for rising river levels and possible overspill. The ODPM will like to remind citizens experiencing heavy rainfall in flood prone areas that they can expect faster than normal accumulation of water especially in saturated and low lying areas.

Additionally, persons can utilise the following precautionary measures to prepare for expected rise in water levels:

HOW TO OBTAIN SANDBAGS

Your Municipal Corporation will have sandbags ready to deploy at times of flooding and their priority is to protect the public at large. You should check with your own local Corporation for further information on acquiring sandbags and sand.

PROTECTING YOUR PROPERTY

Sandbags are of no use if your property is already flooded – concentrate your efforts on protecting yourself, your belongings and moving precious items out of harm’s way!

Consider all entry points that water could get through, not just doorways, such as airbricks, utility service point. Use other solutions for entry points where sandbags are not as effective. You will need at least 6 sandbags to keep out 20cm depth of water for a standard door opening. Each sandbag will need approximately 15kg of sand. Citizens should use *sharp, not soft, sand*.

Filling the bags

This is a two person job: one to hold the bag open and one to fill.

- Do not fill bags more than half full.
- You don’t need to tie the end of the bag.

Placing the bags

- Clear any debris from the area where the bags are to be placed.
- If you can, put a large plastic sheet of heavy duty plastic between the sandbags and the wall of your house.
- Place the bags lengthways, tucking the open end under the filled half of the bag and position it pointing into the direction of water flow.
- Place bags in layers. Like a brick wall, make sure that in the next layer each bag overlaps the one below by half.
- Stamp bags firmly into place to eliminate gaps and create a tight seal by walking on it.
- To lay sandbags in a doorway, it may be necessary to empty some of the contents out or shape the sandbags to achieve a good fit without overlapping.

Additional waterproofing

Lay plastic sheeting across the side of the sandbag wall on the water side. Weigh down with additional sandbags.

The ODPM continues to work closely with the Regional Corporations’ Disaster Management Units to lend support as we monitor present weather conditions.

ENDS

Issued by:

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For further information, please Call:

ODPM’s Customer Call Centre 511/ TEMA’s Hotline 211