Regional Stormwater Protection

REGIONAL FLOOD CONTROL & STORMWATER PROTECTION

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) protects 590 square miles of the Coachella Valley from regional flooding from the local mountains. CVWD’s stormwater team works hard to maintain and operate the Whitewater River Storm Channel and the other channels that carry floodwaters that traverse the areas from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea. CVWD is proud to protect homes and businesses in our community from regional flooding.

FACTS ABOUT STORMWATER PROTECTION

- Regional stormwater is flood water that flows from the surrounding mountains during a storm.
- Channels are designed to convey floodwaters from rain and snow melt from mountain runoff, and local drainage from counties, cities and development.
- CVWD maintains 17 stormwater protection facilities.
- The backbone of the stormwater protection system is a 50-mile storm channel that runs from the Whitewater area north of Palm Springs to the Salton Sea and is known as the Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel.
- The western half of the channel runs along the natural alignment of the Whitewater River that cuts diagonally across the valley to Point Happy in La Quinta.
- The riverbed flattens out naturally in the eastern valley, downstream from Point Happy where constructed storm channel funnels floodwaters to the Salton Sea.
- The entire system includes approximately 169 miles of channels and associated facilities built along the natural alignment of dry washes that carry floodwater from rain in surrounding mountains to the valley floor.

STAY SAFE DURING FLOODS & STORMS

Many streets have been built to cross washes, which are a part of the valley’s stormwater channel system designed to carry floodwaters away from homes and businesses. Some cities have invested in bridges to replace these streets to cross over the wash where streets used to cross.

Here are some tips on staying safe during a storm event:

- **Be mindful.** Flash floods do occur in the Coachella Valley and all residents must be aware when storms hover over nearby mountains. Residents, and especially children, should stay out of the flood control channels when flooding is predicted.
- **Be patient.** Street closures, though inconvenient during a storm, are necessary to prevent loss of life and extensive property damage. Dangerous conditions can occur during storms and can last for several days after the storm has passed.
- **Comply with road closures and other directions of emergency personnel.** Desert storms can be very deceptive. Flows can be strong enough to cause a car or truck to lose traction and float away in as little as two feet of slow-moving water. As little as six inches of fast-moving water can push a car off the road.

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