

# Media Advisory

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## Early Season Ice Jam

While Montanans got out their winter jackets with a blast of unseasonably cold weather in November, water molecules were transforming into ice. The Clark Fork River, west of Drummond and the Jefferson River between Twin Bridges and Silver Star experienced major ice jams on November 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, respectively. Since 1894, there have been over 1700 reported ice jams in Montana, and only seven occurred this early in the season. Montana has the highest number of reported ice jams in the Continental U.S. The earliest recorded ice jam in Montana occurred on October 1st in 1961 in Glacier National Park. The above facts were gleaned from a US Army Corps of Engineers website.

Ice jams and subsequent quick flooding can occur any time after a hit of cold weather. It is important to be prepared for flooding if you live along a river or stream in Montana. Damages from flooding following an ice-jam event can be covered by flood insurance. A 30-day wait applies before the policy becomes effective. Make your New Years' Resolution now to contact your insurance agent to discuss flood insurance coverage.

Ice jams typically occur earlier in the season west of the Continental Divide, and later in the season in Eastern Montana. More ice jams occur in March than in any other month for Montana areas east of the Continental Divide. The latest reported ice jam in a season occurred in 1962 on June 15, in the eastern portion of the state, near Winnett.

Ice jam records help people plan for and be prepared for ice jam flooding. These records are only reflective of ice jam information that is reported. Please assist in keeping ice jam information up to date by reporting ice jams to your local Disaster and Emergency Services official and the National Weather Service. Also, remember to keep a safe distance from any ice jam event. Ice jam information can be reported via the internet or by phone to four National Weather Service Offices in Montana:

- [weather.gov/greatfalls](http://weather.gov/greatfalls) (406.453.3812)
- [weather.gov/billings](http://weather.gov/billings) (406.652.0851)
- [weather.gov/glasgow](http://weather.gov/glasgow) (406.228.2250)
- [weather.gov/missoula](http://weather.gov/missoula) (406.329.4840).

For more information about ice jams in Montana and the Montana Ice Jam Awareness Day in January, visit the National Weather Service website at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/tfx/icejam/>. Be aware and be smart about floods and ice jams.