

WA floods impacting treatment plants

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TACOMA, WA — Mayor Bill Baarsma has declared a civil emergency for this city of about 200,000 due to the threat the rising Puyallup River poses to the city's wastewater treatment plant, according to local reports.

Tacoma, as well as most of northwestern Washington, has been inundated with floodwaters as snowmelt and rain swell rivers and caused mudslides and avalanches.

According to a January 8 KBCI-TV [report](#), residents in northwestern Washington state are effectively cut off from the rest of the nation as the flood conditions have closed dozens of roads, highways and railways. More than 30,000 people have been told to leave their flood-endangered homes here as some rivers crested at record levels and others continued to rise.

The city of Spokane's wastewater treatment plant was processing about 70 million gallons a day, more than the average flow, Bob Hetnar, operator in charge, told [KXLY 4](#). The water, which is accompanied by higher-than-usual levels of sand, is now being treated with an abbreviated treatment process to get the water in and out faster.

"When they are full we don't have any more storage capacity, then we have to process it, disinfect it and send it to the river," Hetnar is quoted as saying.

In Orting, residents were helping to pack sandbags around the city's water treatment plant, the Associated Press [reported](#) on January 8.