



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

# Regional Stormwater Protection

## REGIONAL STORMWATER PROTECTION AND FLOOD CONTROL

In 1937, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) began managing regional stormwater protection and flood control. As the valley's population grew in the 1970s, many communities were built in flood zones, which were devastated by deadly flash flooding. Rancho Mirage Cove and Palm Desert were affected, prompting the construction of several stormwater facilities in the area. Today, CVWD maintains and operates 19 regional stormwater protection channels, spanning from Palm Springs to the Salton Sea, and continues to build additional protection channels as funding becomes available.

## SERVICE AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

- Service area – **381,479 acres**
- Stormwater Channels – **19**
- Length of Whitewater River/Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel – **50 miles**
- Length of all Regional Flood Protection Facilities – **173 miles**

## FLOOD CONTROL & STORMWATER FACTS

Some neighborhoods were built in areas designated by FEMA as high-risk or special hazard flood zones. Visit [msc.fema.gov/portal/search](https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search) to view the Flood Map Service Center. Flood insurance is required in these areas. Visit [fema.gov/flood-insurance](https://fema.gov/flood-insurance) and [floodsmart.gov](https://floodsmart.gov) for more information.

## FUTURE PROJECTS

Future projects include the North Cathedral City and Thousand Palms Regional Stormwater Projects. The first phase of the Cathedral City project is expected to go out to bid for construction by the end of 2025, pending the relocation of utility lines. The Thousand Palms project is still in the land acquisition and regulatory permitting phase.

## WHY SOME STREETS FLOOD

Many streets in the valley were initially built to cross natural washes—dry channels that become active during storms. These washes are part of the region's stormwater protection system, designed to carry floodwater away from communities safely. To improve safety, some cities have built bridges that allow cars to cross safely, even during rain.

## FLOOD AND STORM SAFETY TIPS

- **Stay informed.** Intense flash flooding from heavy rainfall can occur within minutes or hours. Unlike regular stormwater flows, which develop slowly, flash floods happen quickly and often without much warning.
- **Listen** to local weather reports and the National Weather Service warnings.
- **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.** Flowing water 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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Updated September 2025