



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Incident Command provides flooding update for Shiprock and surrounding communities



Recent storms have caused severe flooding in Shiprock, N.M., and many other Navajo communities.

SHIPROCK, N.M. — During an incident command briefing on Saturday, Oct. 24, at the First Responders Substation in Shiprock, Navajo Nation departments provided updates on flooding impacts, road access, utility services and emergency response efforts throughout the Northern Navajo Agency.

“We are working to assist our relatives throughout the Northern Navajo Agency, including families displaced by flooding,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley. “We are coordinating with our federal partners to deploy teams, resources and air support. I encourage impacted chapters to complete ICS 213 forms and conduct damage assessments, which are critical for documenting needs and securing reimbursement. This is a time to come together and support one another.”

On Saturday, Speaker Curley visited chapters including Nenahnezad to assess damages and emergency efforts.

Navajo Nation Police Department (NNPD) Sgt. Eldon Foster is the Incident Commander for the response, known as Operation Shiprock Flooding 2026.

Incident command officials reported that the eastbound lane of the Shiprock Bridge on U.S. Highway 64 has reopened under reduced traffic capacity. The Navajo Nation Police Department is limiting crossings to 10 vehicles at a time, with priority given to public safety and emergency response vehicles.

Response teams continue monitoring areas along the river from Gadii'ahi/To'koi to Farmington to assess bridge structures and surrounding conditions. Before reopening the Shiprock Bridge, teams evaluated its structural integrity and conducted an assessment by airboat.

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) Shiprock District Manager Wilfred Franklin Jr. provided updates on utility services and ongoing safety measures. Four downed utility poles caused a power outage on the south side of Shiprock. Most power has been restored, but some customers, including businesses and residents in housing areas south of the bridge, remain without electricity.

Franklin said NTUA shut off its 14-inch water transmission line as a safety precaution while ensuring water tanks in the area remain replenished.

He also reported that wastewater facilities and holding ponds in Farmington and Bloomfield were damaged by flooding, resulting in sewage releases into the San Juan River. NTUA has not yet determined the volume of sewage released. Franklin noted that the holding ponds can store up to 1 million gallons per day.

A pump serving the Cutter Lateral system also required replacement. NTUA is working to address the issue, and communities served by the system are expected to maintain water access through local storage tanks and backup wells.

Natural gas service in the Shiprock region remains operational. NTUA will notify customers if service shutdowns become necessary. The utility authority is continuing to monitor infrastructure and has contingency plans to redirect power in the event of additional outages.

Interim Director of the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management (DEM) Harland Cleveland said the department is coordinating with federal partners from FEMA Regions 6 and 9. DEM has deployed assistance to Aneth and remains on standby to support search, rescue and emergency response operations.

Additional personnel are urgently needed in Aneth to assist with evacuating residents as river levels continue to rise. Requests have been made for Navajo Nation Police District commanders to mobilize additional officers and for Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from the Chinle Agency to assist with local response efforts.

According to the latest information provided by the National Weather Service, the river was at 26,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), with levels forecast to reach 40,000 cfs by 5 a.m. Sunday. Emergency personnel are concerned about the potential for significant impacts to families and homes in the Aneth area overnight.

The Navajo Nation Rangers, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Agriculture and Best Friends Animal Society also provided updates on response efforts. Assistance for livestock and domestic animals, including hay, dog food, kennels and vaccines, will be made available to help affected community members.

For information about food assistance, shelter locations and available resources, community members may contact the Incident Command Center at (928) 730-8365.

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