

# COMMUNITY ALERT



**TODAY'S DATE:** February 5, 2024

**RELEASE DATE:** Immediate

**TITLE:** City of St. Helena Responds to Impacts of Weekend Storm  
(COMMUNITY ALERT 2024-04)

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Dear St. Helena Community Members,

As we cope with the impacts of this recent storm on our community, please know that the City is actively working with other entities to address these issues and restore normalcy as soon as possible.

Regarding the loss of power, I know how disruptive it can be to daily life (it impacted many of City staff as well). [PG&E reported today](#) that this was one of the most damaging, single-day storms on record, only comparable to storms in 2008 and 1995. As of 2 p.m. today they are dealing with 873 individual outages impacting more than 56,000 customers in Napa, Sonoma, and Marin Counties. They have more than 3,000 employees engaged in this event accessing damage, making repairs, handling emergency calls, and hundreds more staffed in emergency operations support centers. Their crews are currently prioritizing the largest outage locations, life-safety, and public facilities. For outage updates, please visit the [PG&E Outage Center website](#), customers can also setup alerts for updates from this site.

Since the storms began on Wednesday, January 31, Public Works, Fire, and Police Departments have been actively checking critical infrastructure and roadways throughout the City and responding to numerous calls and clearing downed trees.

- On Wednesday evening, Public Works crews began [emergency pumping operations](#) at Vineyard Valley. They were able to keep up with the increased flows until early Sunday morning when the system was overwhelmed, even with the additional bypass pumping reaching 2,500 gallons per minute. This was caused by significant storm water infiltration into the aging pipes and the ground being so saturated, not because of household sewer use.
  - Public Works staff has implemented necessary steps per the Sanitary Sewer Management Plan and is drawing samples from waterways and reporting to Cal OES. They were on a call earlier today with the State Water Board to discuss the situation and continued response.
- On Sunday numerous trees fell throughout the City, temporarily blocking some roadways and, unfortunately, doing significant damage to the [Boys and Girls Clubhouse and Teen Center](#). Both will remain closed while the condition of the building is assessed. This impacts grades 3 through 12 only, the location at the Primary School serving kindergarten through grade 2 is open. The Clubhouse and Teen Center in Calistoga also remains open.
- Public Works and Fire Departments, along with many other contractors and agencies have been and will continue to clear downed branches and trees from public roadways and rights-of-way, prioritizing keeping roadways open and safe to travel through first. This included clearing roads in the Sylvaner Avenue and Spring Street area, as well as closing roads along Spring Mountain Road, and working with a contractor to deal with a

downed oak tree on Spring Mountain Road that also involved coordinating with PG&E to de-energize downed power lines.

- Temporary stop signs were deployed by the Public Works Department along Main Street when the traffic signals were without power.
- A storm drain failure in the St. James neighborhood was mitigated by Public Works Department staff with the use of bypass pumps.
- With the power outage on Spring Mountain Road, the two potable water pumping stations in that area are currently running on generator power.
- There was a minor slide on Silverado Trail within City Limits, the St. Helena Fire Department assessed the scene and cleared the roadway.

For those without power, the [St. Helena Public Library](#) is open as are many businesses along Main Street. The Library's friendly and welcoming staff will be available during its normal hours all week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Monday through Friday) and 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday offering a warm place to go, read a book, use WiFi, and/or charge devices.

In terms of storm impacts, I am relieved to report that City staff managed to address most of the issues promptly and the City fared better than other areas of our region that are also dealing with the impacts of not only the rain, but also the gusting winds.

Please be assured that our priority remains the safety and well-being of City residents. We are committed to resolving these issues as quickly and efficiently as possible.

To report downed trees blocking roadways, flooded streets, or other damage on public roads or areas please contact Public Works team at (707) 968-2658 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For after-hours emergencies, please call the St. Helena Police Department's non-emergency dispatch line at (707) 967-2850. For life-threatening emergencies, please call 9-1-1.

I am so grateful for Police, Fire, and Public Works staff who braved the elements while the rest of us were indoors dry and relatively warm. They continue to monitor and address issues as needed. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

Sincerely,  
Anil Comelo  
City Manager  
City of St. Helena



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