

## **Storm Risk Management in Parks**

“Storm events are inevitable. Consistent processes, defensible decisions, and clear communication reduce risk, protect the public, and support staff.”

### **Recommendation for Local Government Employees**

Severe weather and storm events are increasing in frequency and intensity, placing greater pressure on parks, trails, and public spaces. While every local government faces unique challenges, effective storm risk management helps local governments protect public safety, support frontline staff, and make defensible decisions in dynamic conditions. What each local government can reasonably do will depend on its specific circumstances, available resources, and local conditions. A structured approach allows organizations to respond consistently, reasonably, and transparently before, during, and after storm events, while remaining adaptable to local needs..

### **What Is Storm Risk Management in Parks?**

Storm risk management is a practical, decision-based approach to identifying hazards, assessing risk, and implementing reasonable mitigation measures in parks and outdoor spaces during extreme weather. It balances public access with safety, operational capacity, and organizational risk tolerance, recognizing that not all risk can be eliminated.

### **Why Storm Risk Management Matters**

Storm-related claims and incidents often arise from conditions such as—fallen trees, unstable slopes, flooded trails, damaged infrastructure, or unclear public messaging. A consistent storm response framework helps local governments:

- Identify known and emerging hazards
- Act consistently across departments and events
- Support staff making time-sensitive decisions
- Demonstrate a reasonable and defensible approach to risk
- Reduce repeat incidents and claims exposure

### **Risk Management Benefits**

- Improved public safety outcomes

- Clear decision-making triggers for staff
- Better coordination between operations, communications, and risk management
- Reduced confusion for park users through consistent messaging
- Stronger defensibility of operational decisions following storm events

## **What Supports Effective Storm Risk Management**

- Awareness of known risks and site-specific vulnerabilities
- Clear operational practices or policies
- Defined triggers for action (e.g., high winds, exceptional rainfall, ice warnings)
- Practical mitigation strategies that are achievable with available resources
- Thoughtful use of signage when closures are not feasible
- Post-event review to inform future response and planning

## **Key Message for Attendees**

Storm risk management is not about eliminating all risks, it is about making **reasonable, consistent, and defensible decisions** that prioritize public safety while recognizing operational realities. Clear processes, balanced signage, and proactive planning help local governments respond effectively to storms and support staff on the ground.