



Regionales Führungsorgan Saanen

**Media release no. 1 as of Monday, 11.12.2023 / 7.30pm**

**High water situation as of 11 December 2023**

Closure period: none

**The intense, continuous rainfall since Sunday evening, combined with the melting snow at lower and higher altitudes, has caused the water levels in Saanenland to rise, leading to the closure of some hiking trails. As far as we know at present, no people have been injured. No major damage has been reported so far either.**

Abundant precipitation since yesterday Sunday evening led to isolated flooding situations in the municipality of Saanen and Gsteig. The snow line remained well above 2000 metres above sea level, which further favoured snowmelt. On the plain in the Moor (Schönried), there were major water accumulations and the Chouflisbach stream overflowed, which resulted in the closure of the hiking trail there. Debris flows are to be expected mostly on steep slopes, favoured by the masses of snow soaked by the rainwater.

Saanen and Gsteig reported a steady rise in the water level of the Saane river and its inflows on Monday afternoon and announced the closure of the following sections of hiking trails until Monday evening:

Municipality of Saanen: Schönried promenade path and Grund hiking trail between Moosfangbrücke and "Cantova" bridge

Municipality of Gsteig: all hiking trails along the Saane river

In Lauenen, the level of the Louibach also rose sharply, but no closures were reported so far.

The Saanen fire brigade has already been alerted due to the rising groundwater and the risk of flooding. The deployment of members of the civil defence is being prepared to replace them. The RFO is also on increased standby for an extended operation, ready to be activated at any time.

Water levels are expected to rise further over the next few hours as a result of persistent rainfall and relatively high temperatures. Debris flows can also occur anywhere and at any time.

*In the current situation, the core staff of the RFO recommends that the entire population*

- *Avoid water bodies and steep slopes*
- *Pay increased attention on the roads*
- *Avoid walking/hiking next to hill sides and near bodies of water*
- *Do not enter closed sections of paths under any circumstances*



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- *If necessary, accompany children when leaving the house*

*In the event of special incidents, the general emergency numbers apply.*

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