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State Residents Urged to not Delay Repairs to Flood-Damaged Homes and Businesses

Camp Murray, Wash. – Washington residents should begin now to make repairs on flood-damaged structures and not wait for possible government aid, a Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD) disaster aid expert said today.

"Repairs should begin now on flood-damaged property, said John Vollmer, who heads the human services disaster recovery program in WEMD. "Delays will make repairs more costly and increase the chance that building occupants will be exposed to mold and other hazards."

Gov. Chris Gregoire asked on Nov. 21 for a federal disaster declaration for individual and homeowner assistance in 11 counties affected by flood damage earlier in the month. Her request sought federal assistance for Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, King, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston and Wahkiakum counties

"Even if the federal disaster declaration is approved, there is no guarantee that all flood damage can qualify for federal disaster aid. Federal disaster grants only finance limited repairs for homeowners and individuals who have uninsured losses of homes or property," said Vollmer.

Other steps persons with flood-damaged property should take:

- Report damage to local emergency management officials if it has not already been reported.
- Contact private insurance carriers for coverage information.
- If homeowners and property owners begin repairs, they should keep records of all clean-up and repair costs and document damages with photos or written statements of neighbors or non-family members.
- Inventory damaged property before it is thrown out.
- If needed, contact private non-profit organizations for assistance with both cleanup and re-construction projects.
- Consider health and safety needs in the cleanup. Wash your hands frequently with soap and clean water if you come in contact with flood waters.

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