



# EMERGENCY NEWS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

State Emergency Operations Center, Camp Murray, Washington  
Emergency Management Division, Washington Military Department

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## **For immediate release**

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## **State Flood Update**

Camp Murray, WA – The Washington State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remains fully operational today as local, state and federal agencies continue their response and recovery efforts resulting from this week’s devastating storm. The EOC has received 97 requests for support, including fuel, water, generators, vehicles, sandbags, food, sanitation supplies, staff, and evacuations for stranded residents.

The state Military Department, the Washington National Guard, Agriculture, Department of Social and Health Services, Community, Trade and Economic Development, Health, Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Transportation, Washington State Patrol, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters and the American Red Cross are represented at the State EOC.

### **Relief Efforts**

The primary concern today was meeting the needs of individuals and families by providing needed food, clothing, shelter, counseling and medication.

Public willingness to assist with the needs of flood victims has been substantial and generous. The overwhelming need of the private relief agencies is for cash donations designated for flood relief.

The public is encouraged to continue providing disaster relief donations, recognizing that cash is the most helpful resource to the private relief agencies. Although relief agencies continue to accept donated goods, they want the public to understand that donated goods cannot be designated for specific locations or response efforts. Also, organizations such as Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Red Cross are not organized to rapidly process goods directly from drop-off to local flood relief in large-scale disasters.

### **Health and Safety Issues**

In addition to the risk of drowning, flood waters also present danger from bacteria and pathogens that can sicken people and animals. The Washington departments of Health and Ecology urge residents to stay away from flood waters to minimize their health risks. In some cases, local “boil-water” orders may be in place in communities where water systems are not fully functioning.

The public should be aware of carbon monoxide hazards that occur with the use of portable generators, kerosene heaters, charcoal fires, and other improvised heat sources. As the number of days without power grows and temperatures fall more people will resort to alternate fuel sources for heat and should be cautious to not use combustible materials in closed spaces where poisonous gases can collect.

### **Search and Rescue Operations**

The number of requests for rescue has been significantly reduced. The Helibase established at Olympia Airport was closed at 6 p.m. today and aircraft resources have been returned to their home locations. U.S. Coast Guard aircraft remain on standby for rescue or Medivac missions.

### **Road Closures**

I-5 is currently closed both north and southbound from mile post 68 (SR 12) to mile post 88 (Grand Mound) in Lewis/Thurston County.

While it is unknown when I-5 will re-open, Washington State Department of Transportation continues to open state routes across the state, assess damaged highway structures, and coordinate movement of supplies with the National Guard. Detour routes around the closure have been well traveled. The freight community is aware of detour routes.

Road closures are in place in many areas, and drivers are advised to check their route before departure at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/News/Update](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/News/Update). Updated travel information is also available by calling 511 (TTY at 1 (800) 833-6388).

### **Power Outages**

Approximately 35,000 residents remain out of power, but the number is steadily declining. The largest number of outages is in Grays Harbor, where approximately 25,000 homes and businesses are without power. About 1,000 customers in both Clallam and Lewis counties and another 500 in Mason are waiting for power to return.

The Bonneville Power Administration transmission has been restored to all locations with the exception of Cosmopolis. Pacific County Public Utilities Department reported some Raymond and Naselle customers were restored today, and power was restored to Chinook, Ilwaco and Seaview. Pacific County has 6,000 thousand customers without power.

Continued scattered power outages will occur until access is cleared to downed power lines, water has receded and areas are safe for utility crews to proceed. New outages may occur as trees rooted in rain-saturated soils topple and cause more line damage.

### **Shelters**

The American Red Cross (ARC) reports 20 shelters open in 7 counties. A total of 770 displaced residents spent Tuesday night in shelters. Many displaced people are staying with friends or family.

### **Resources**

The ARC is providing a Web-based contact resource for the public who want to learn if friends and family in storm damaged areas are okay. The Web site ([www.safeandwell.org](http://www.safeandwell.org)) allows people

to register themselves as “safe and well.”

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services urges clients in storm affected areas needing help with food and cash assistance to use the DSHS call center number at 1-877-980-9180. The calls will be routed to staff who will ask callers for their zip codes, home address, and identity information.

Reports of child abuse and neglect are also being rerouted. Callers are urged to report abuse to local numbers or 1-866-EndHarm (1-866-363-4276).

**Individual preparedness actions recommended by the Washington State Emergency Management Division:**

Residents in flood prone or flood watch areas should consider the following preparedness actions:

- Listen to radio or television stations for local information and weather reports.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels and areas known to flood suddenly.
- Do not walk or drive through floodwaters.
- Secure your home. If time permits, also secure items located outside the house.
- If instructed, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves.
- Fill your car with fuel.
- Fill the bathtub with water in case the water supply becomes contaminated or services are cut off. Sterilize the bathtub first.
- When deep flooding is likely, permit the floodwaters to flow freely into your basement to avoid structural damage to the foundation and the house.
- Only use generators outdoors and far away from open windows and vents.
- Never use a generator indoors, in garages or carports.
- Never cook or heat inside on a charcoal or gas grill.
- Let family members know that you are safe by listing yourself on the American Red Cross Safe and Well Web site: [www.safeandwell.org](http://www.safeandwell.org).

The State EOC is monitoring flood levels and weather conditions and standing by to provide further assistance to local jurisdictions as requested.

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