



# 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.

### **Outlook for Coming Days**

Drier weather is forecast for the next few days and river flooding should abate by Friday. Pockets of power outages will continue until crews are able to reach downed power lines. Most counties and cities affected by the storm and floods are moving from response to recovery operations and are beginning to develop preliminary damage assessment estimates.

### **Relief Efforts**

The public has responded generously to the needs of flood victims. Private relief agencies say that cash donations designated for flood relief are the most helpful at this point. 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.

Primary efforts are centered on assisting local jurisdictions to repair or replace generators powering water systems, plus supplying bottled water, food, & fuel to outlying population centers. The Washington National Guard will truck frozen food from a community food bank in Port Townsend to the Hoh Tribal Center today. The Quinault Tribe and the Shoalwater Bay Tribe have both requested assistance with generator repair and/or replacement. Grays Harbor

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County will not be operating Community Points of Distribution after all, but has made MREs and bottled water available for people to pick up at the County Fairgrounds in Elma.

### **Shelters**

As of Thursday morning, 646 evacuees were housed in Red Cross and community shelters in the following locations:

- **Lewis County:**
  - Westminster Presbyterian Church
  - LDS Church Chehalis
  - LDS Church Centralia
  - Centralia Armory
  - Salvation Army Corp
- **Grays Harbor County**
  - Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds
  - Oak Ville Elementary School
  - Galilean Lutheran Church
  - Union Gospel Mission
  - Assembly of God Church
  - Water of Life Church
  - Salvation Army-Aberdeen
- **Thurston County**
  - Rochester LDS Church
- **Mason County**
  - PUD #3
  - Their Community Center in Belfair
- **Snohomish County**
  - World Harvester Family Church

Shelter locations may change as needs change, so people seeking shelter should contact their county emergency management to check on active shelter locations.

### **Public Health and Safety Issues**

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a major concern as people return to their homes. In Grays Harbor County, nineteen people at an IGA grocery store in Ocean Shores were sickened. All but two have been released from the Grays Harbor Community Hospital. There have been no reported deaths.

The Department of Health (DOH) urges state agencies and local emergency response teams to warn people about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. DOH activated the agency's Emergency Operations Center in Tumwater on Wednesday to assist with information gathering. DOH is contacting local health jurisdictions to obtain current status of operations and inquire about resource needs, including vaccine.

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In response to an earlier offer of Hepatitis A vaccine, Mason County has requested 50 doses, Grays Harbor County has requested 30 doses and Lewis County is working with DOH immunization program to determine how much vaccine it needs. Lewis County has also requested 100 doses of Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis.

DOH has contacted all affected hospitals in the region, except Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco. Each hospital is reporting that their situation is improving and any request for help have been handled by their county EOCs.

DOH reports 14 water systems affecting 4,400 people are currently shut down, and nine water systems serving 14,500 people are under boil-water orders.

### **Fatalities**

There are now four fatalities. Grays Harbor County had already reported two and Mason County one. Pacific County is now reporting one fatality due to a house fire possibly started from a candle.

### **River status**

The Chehalis River remains above flood stage. Its flood crest is moving downstream through Grays Harbor County and was projected to reach the mouth of the river around midnight last night. Interaction between flood waters and the tide could worsen flooding along the lower reaches of the river, especially during high tide at Aberdeen this morning. Ten foot tides are expected at Aberdeen today at 10 a.m. and 10 p.m.

### **Transportation**

The I-5 closure continues to present a significant disruption of commercial and public traffic. The National Guard is supporting an I-5 detour plan in conjunction with Lewis County, the City of Centralia, and the Washington Department of Transportation (WASDOT) to provide an alternate route around the I-5 closure in Lewis County for light vehicles. Guard personnel will be staffing several Traffic Control points in the detour path. Local jurisdictions will be staffing Traffic Control points as well. This will provide some relief for that critical north-south corridor.

WASDOT field staff is assisting utility crews and trucks with access around road closures so they can restore electricity to residents. WASDOT is reviewing trucking requests to move perishable and life-sustaining items quickly through traffic control points. WASDOT continues to work with the U.S. Corps of Engineers on I-5 dike breach issues, after a dike there was breached at 6:40 p.m. Wednesday night.

### **Communications**

The Forks and North Coast telecommunication service was restored early Wednesday evening, after CenturyTel crews were able to reach damaged fiber locations late that afternoon. All service should now be restored to CenturyTel exchanges north of Aberdeen, including all private line, Internet, switched and broadband traffic. CenturyTel still has small scattered outages, but all wire centers are back up. Some of the small sites are on generator power and that will continue until power is restored. Efforts today will be focused in Pacific County, Wahkiakum County and Eastern Lewis County.

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### **Search and Rescue**

Rescue operations have been completed for this disaster, at least for now. Department of Defense aircraft have returned to home locations, and WASDOT Aviation Support has demobilized. Airspace restrictions were released at 6 p.m., Wednesday evening, and the Rescue Coordination Center in the State EOC has returned to normal response mode.

### **Oil and Hazardous Material Response**

Ecology anticipates responding to numerous reports of abandoned drums, tanks and containers left behind by receding flood waters.

### **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has the lead on animal carcass disposal. The Animal Disposal Working Group is gathering current disposal information. The Washington State Department of Agriculture provided Lewis County with contact information for the two state animal rendering facilities so they can begin disposal of dairy cattle carcasses. WSDA coordinated with DOT to help trucks access blocked areas to provide animal feed, pick up product and pick up carcasses for rendering.

### **Energy**

Clallam County now has fewer than 100 customers without power. Grays Harbor County has approximately 20,000-25,000 customers without power, but the goal is to restore service to the majority of those customers by Friday. Lewis County has approximately 1,000 customers without power, and Mason County has 420. Pacific County is reporting that power to Bonneville Power Authority (BPA) transmission substations has been restored and most of the power has been restored to Raymond; 5,500 Pacific County residents were still without power this morning. Total power outages statewide are estimated to be less than 30,000.

### **Public Safety and Security**

The Washington State Patrol and WASDOT continue to monitor road closures on all major roadways within the affected counties, and provide updated information and transportation support as necessary.

### **Military Support to Civil Authorities**

Rapid Reaction Teams are in place in four counties—Lewis, Mason, Grays Harbor and Pacific, while National Guard liaisons are in those counties and the City of Centralia. The Guard supported an evacuation in Southwest Centralia with 18 soldiers and six vehicles. Guard soldiers in coordination with the Washington State Patrol continue to staff traffic control points in support of the Washington State Department of Transportation along I-5 and other locations. The Guard is supporting Red Cross shelter operations and transportation in Centralia, and also delivered approximately 400 MREs (packaged meals ready to eat) to Grays Harbor County.

### **Activation status**

- State EOC continues full Phase III activation.
- Local EOCs remain activated in the Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Snohomish, Thurston and Wahkiakum counties.

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**Washington Emergency Management Department (WEMD) liaisons**

- State EOC liaisons visited Shoalwater Bay Tribe and Quinault Indian Nation on Wednesday, Dec. 5, for direct coordination of urgent needs.
- Visits to Hoh Tribe, Quilluete Tribe and Makah Tribe are scheduled today (Thursday, Dec. 6).

**Agency involvement**

*State:* Washington Emergency Management Division; departments of Fish and Wildlife; Military; Agriculture; Natural Resources; Health; Transportation; General Administration; Ecology; Parks and Recreation; Community, Trade and Economic Development; Social and Health Services; the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission; Washington State Patrol; and amateur groups, ARES/RACES. *Federal:* Federal Emergency Management Region X, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard. *Non-Governmental Organizations:* American Red Cross and Washington Volunteers Organizations Active in Disasters

**Declarations and proclamations**

- Governor's Emergency Proclamation completed Monday, Dec 3.
- Local Emergency Declarations: Grays Harbor County; King County; Kitsap County; Lewis County; Mason County; Pacific County; Pierce County; Snohomish County; Thurston County; Wahkiakum County; Whatcom County; City of Bothell; City of Kirkland; Makah Tribe; Quinault Indian Nation.

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