



EMERGENCY NEWS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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

For immediate release

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Contact: Rob Harper

Phone: 800-688-8955 (*media only*)

Web address: www.wadisasternews.com

State Flood Update

Camp Murray, Wash. – The Washington State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remains fully operational today as local, state and federal agencies continue recovery efforts following this week's devastating storm. The EOC has received 137 requests for support, including fuel, water, generators, vehicles, sandbags, food, sanitation supplies, staff and rescues for stranded residents.

The state departments of Military; Agriculture; Social and Health Services; Community, Trade and Economic Development; Health; Ecology; Fish and Wildlife; Natural Resources; Transportation; and Washington State Patrol; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Coast Guard; Washington Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (WAVOAD); American Red Cross, WIN 2-1-1, and Amateur Radio Emergency Services are coordinating with or represented at the State EOC.

Outlook for Coming Days

Drier weather is forecasted for the next few days and river flooding should abate today. 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 to recovery operations and are beginning to develop preliminary damage assessment estimates.

Relief Efforts

Primary efforts are centered on assisting local jurisdictions by providing generators to powering water systems, in addition to supplying bottled water, food, and fuel to outlying population centers.

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 response/support 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.

Other Assistance

Another important source of information is the 2-1-1 system around the state. People should dial 2-1-1 for information about storm-related community resources and services in their area.

Shelters

Thursday night, Dec. 6th, 195 evacuees were housed in Red Cross and community shelters,

down from 650 Wednesday night. Shelter locations may change as needs change. People seeking shelter should contact their county emergency management to check on active shelter locations.

Currently, eight shelters are open in three counties in the following locations:

- **Lewis County:**
 - Westminster Presbyterian Church (Chehalis)
 - LDS Church (Centralia)
 - Armory (Centralia)
 - Pe Ell School
- **Grays Harbor County:**
 - Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds (Elma)
- **Pacific County:**
 - LDS Church (Long Beach)

Persons who need immediate help finding food, housing and other essential needs should contact the American Red Cross at 1-866-Get Info.

Public Health and Safety Issues

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a major concern for those who continue to be without power. Earlier in the week in Grays Harbor County, 19 people at an IGA grocery store in Ocean Shores were sickened. 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 for hepatitis A and tetanus. The Department of Health is working directly with each local health jurisdiction to order vaccines which are expected to arrive from the Center for Disease Control today.

The Department of Health reports 13 water systems affecting 1,000 people are currently shut down, and 11 water systems serving 15,000 people are under boil-water orders. For questions about drinking water safety and systems, please contact 1-800-521-0323.

The Department of Health has issued emergency closures of 25 commercial shellfish growing areas. One or more commercial areas are closed in the following counties: Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Pierce, Jefferson, Kitsap, Clallam, Snohomish and Island. If these areas experience typical weather conditions, some may begin to re-open as early as next week.

Fatalities

The two hikers killed in an avalanche near Alpentel raised the Washington State fatality count to six. Counties reporting fatalities are Grays Harbor, 2; Mason, 1; and Pacific, 1; and King, 2.

River Status

The Chehalis River in Grays Harbor County is receding more slowly than expected and remains above flood stage at or just below the town of Porter. Interaction between tides in Grays Harbor and Chehalis River flood waters could worsen flooding at high tide.

Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) continues to track road closures and re-openings. Southbound and northbound I-5 between milepost 68 and milepost 77 was reopened earlier today with one lane in each direction for commercial truck traffic. This section then was closed at 10 a.m. today to allow WSDOT crews to clear debris from the highway. When it reopens, two lanes in each direction will be open to all vehicles.

Communications

Seven cellular sites remain out of service in Grays Harbor County, six for AT&T and one for Verizon.

Search and Rescue

The Rescue Coordination Center in the State EOC remains on stand-by.

Oil and Hazardous Material Response

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

Agriculture and Natural Resources

State and local plans are in place. The Washington State departments of Health, Agriculture and Ecology stand ready to assist local authorities with the healthy disposal of animal carcasses.

Energy

Grays Harbor County has approximately 14,500 customers without power as of 10:15 a.m. today. Lewis County has approximately 24 customers without power, and Mason County has 50. Approximately 1,900 Pacific County residents were still without power Thursday. Total power outages statewide are estimated to be less than 16,472.

Public Safety and Security

Attorney General Rob McKenna is warning Washington residents to beware of possible flood-related repair scams including fraudulent home repair offers and charity appeals.

The Attorney General suggests the following tips:

- Insist on seeing proper identification from anyone who offers assistance for pay;
- Never provide personal information to an unknown caller or someone who comes to the door; and
- Avoid contractors who solicit door to door, pressure you for an immediate decision, accept only cash, request all or most of the money upfront, offer an exceptionally low bid or refuse to provide a written contract. Whenever possible, homeowners should work with a local contractor they know and trust.

National Guard Support to Civil Authorities

Washington National Guard soldiers continue to go door to door to check on residents in areas cut-off by the flood. In addition, our citizen soldiers are transporting food and water to areas in need as well as staffing traffic control points in coordination with the Washington State Patrol. The National Guard coordinated the delivery of 400 gallons of donated bottled water to the Quinault Tribe, and a generator to the Shoalwater Bay Tribe to power its water transportation system. Rapid Reaction Teams are in place in four counties—Lewis, Mason, Grays Harbor and

Pacific, while National Guard liaisons remain in those counties and the City of Centralia.

Damage Assessments

Individual assessment teams will conduct on-the-ground damage assessment in Lewis and Grays Harbor counties from Saturday morning to Sunday night to add to our State's federal disaster request. This is a normal part of the State's disaster request process.

Activation status

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

Washington Emergency Management Department (WEMD) liaisons

- State EOC liaisons visited the Hoh Tribe, the Quileute Tribe and the Makah Tribe on Thursday, December 6, for direct coordination of urgent needs.

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, December 3, 2007.
- 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; and Quinault Indian Nation.

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