



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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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 from this week's devastating storm and flooding. The EOC has received 146 requests for support, including fuel, water, generators, vehicles, sandbags, food, sanitation supplies, staff and rescues for stranded residents.

Weather

The most significant factor for people in the disaster area who are still without power is that nighttime temperatures may drop into the low 20s for the next four days, increasing the need for heating fuel (wood and gas) and other cold weather requirements.

Energy

Grays Harbor County had approximately 3,000 customers without power as of 10:30 a.m. Saturday. Lewis County has approximately 24 customers without power, Pacific County has 650, and Mason County has 5.

Shelters

Friday night, 96 evacuees were housed in Red Cross and community shelters, down from 143 the night before. Persons who need immediate help finding food, housing and other essential needs should contact the American Red Cross at 1-866-Get Info. Shelter locations may change as needs change. People seeking shelter should contact their county emergency management office for active shelter locations. Currently, 8 shelters are open in three counties:

- **Grays Harbor County**
Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds, Elma
Galilean Lutheran Church, Ocean Shores
Union Gospel Mission, Aberdeen
- **Lewis County**
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Chehalis
LDS Church, Centralia
Centralia Armory
- **Pacific County**
LDS Church, Long Beach
South Bend Elementary, South Bend

Relief Efforts

Primary efforts are centered on assisting local jurisdictions by providing generators to power water

systems, in addition to supplying bottled water, food, fuel and blankets to outlying population centers. With colder weather coming on, the need for blankets is growing rapidly. The Red Cross is supplying approximately 1,040 blankets to Grays Harbor this afternoon, with delivery being provided by the National Guard. More blankets are on the way, as resources in the disaster area have been exhausted.

Public Health and Safety

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a major concern for those who still do not have power. The Department of Health (DOH) urges state agencies and local emergency responders to continue warning people about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Wal-Mart stores in the disaster area have agreed to hand out carbon monoxide warnings with every generator sold. Other retail organizations are being approached to provide the same information to their customers.

Water

DOH reports 14 water systems affecting 2,883 people are currently shut down, and 13 water systems serving 6,688 people are on boiled water advisories. Three systems affecting 6,388 people have had service restored. For questions about drinking water safety and systems, please contact 1-800-521-0323.

Relief Organizations

Private relief agencies say the public has responded generously to the needs of flood victims, adding that cash donations designated for flood relief are the best way to help. 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.

Official visit

Governor Gregoire, U.S. Congressman Norm Dicks, U.S. Senators Patti Murray and Maria Cantwell, and state and federal officials are scheduled for a damage observation flight and visits to Chehalis and Elma today.

Disaster Request

Yesterday Governor Gregoire requested President Bush to declare a federal disaster for public assistance damage resulting from the storm and flooding in six counties – Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston. This declaration request outlines an initial \$3.6 million in disaster response and cleanup costs. This weekend, Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) teams are inspecting devastated areas of Lewis and Grays Harbor counties to supplement Gov. Gregoire's request for federal disaster assistance, specifically for those programs that will provide for the immediate needs of residents and businesses.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Washington State departments of Health, Agriculture and Ecology are assisting local authorities with the healthy disposal of animal carcasses.

National Guard Support

The Washington National Guard has 474 soldiers on active duty for the response effort. Seventy-six soldiers continue to provide supplies, security and door-to-door checks on the welfare of storm victims in Grays Harbor County; the Guard also has liaisons in Grays Harbor, Pacific and Lewis counties, and the city of Centralia. The Guard will start releasing approximately 125 soldiers and airmen today and

tomorrow but has another 120 soldiers training throughout this weekend who can be diverted to storm response and recovery operations if needed.

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

Offices in Centralia and Chehalis are closed due to storm damage. It is unknown when the necessary repairs to these offices will be completed. DSHS services for Centralia and Chehalis residents are currently being provided by offices in Olympia.

Hazardous Material Response and Other Post-Flood Issues

The Department of Ecology anticipates responding to numerous reports of abandoned drums, tanks and containers left behind by receding flood waters. Ecology is also providing information on a variety of post-flood issues:

- Actions to take if people come upon hazardous materials left behind by flood waters;
- The need for a permit when burning flood debris;
- How flood plains work—what’s legal and what’s not; and
- Seattle-area sewage overflows.

The Washington Conservation Corps, an Americorps entity administered by Ecology, has been doing emergency response and recovery work in the disaster area.

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.

Transportation

I-5 in the Chehalis vicinity is now reopened to all traffic.

River Status

The Chehalis River dropped below flood stage on Friday at the town of Porter in Grays Harbor County. All rivers are now below flood stage and continue to recede.

Fatalities

Six fatalities are attributed to this week’s storm and flooding: two in Grays Harbor County, two in King County, one in Mason County and one in Pacific County.

Activation status

- State EOC continues full Phase III activation.
- Local emergency operations centers remain activated in Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston counties; the city of Centralia; and Quinault Indian Nation.

Agency involvement

The following agencies and entities are represented at, or coordinating with, the State EOC. **State:** 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; **Federal:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Coast Guard. **Non-Governmental Organizations:** American Red Cross, Washington Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (WAVOAD), WIN 2-1-1 and ARES/RACES (amateur radio).

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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