



Washington
Military
Department
Emergency
Management
Division
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Washington
www.emd.wa.gov

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Contact: Rob Harper, WEMD, 2530-512-7005
Tim Church, DOH, 360-236-4077
Alice Fiman, WSDOT, 360-705-7080

Wind, snow, power outages = Get ready

OLYMPIA – Power outages could be in the offing this weekend. With more winter weather coming our way, Washingtonians need to continue and step up their preparedness efforts today and through this weekend.

“The National Weather Service predicts much of the state can expect more snowfall overnight Saturday. Our biggest concern, however,” stated Jim Mullen, director, Washington Emergency Management Division, “is the high winds predicted to blow down out of the Cascades into the eastern areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

“We can probably expect and are preparing for widespread power outages. Coupling this with the continued cold temperatures, I urge everyone to make sure they’re ready to go several days without power.”

Washington Emergency Management Division

Today or Saturday morning, people should make sure their 72-hour emergency kits are stocked with fresh water, food, prescription medication, flashlight and radio batteries, and other supplies. Another thing you can do is make sure you have a corded phone available—cordless phones will not work when the power is out. Also, if you own a garage door opener, know how to open the door without power.

More information on how to prepare for power outages can be found on-line in the Emergency Resource Guide (page 31) at:

http://emd.wa.gov/publications/documents/2008Emergency_Resource_Guide.pdf

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal. It’s crucial to use generators safely, and to avoid using propane or charcoal indoors for cooking or heat. Watch a video on Generator Safety and Carbon Monoxide at:

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/videos/video_generatorsafety.shtml

Other preparedness information is available in several languages at:

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_travel_preparedness.shtml

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_infocus_winter.shtml

Washington Department of Health

If your power has been out, food safety may be a concern. Some reminders:

- If perishable food is cold to touch, and you know it has not been above 45 degrees Fahrenheit for more than one or two hours, it is probably safe to keep, use or refreeze.
- Discard all meat, seafood, dairy products or cooked food that does not feel cold to the touch. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Never taste suspect food. It may look and smell fine, even though the bacteria that cause foodborne illness are present.

When food gets wet, the rule is, "When in doubt, throw it out!" It’s not worth the health risk.

- Toss out all packaged and unpackaged foods, fresh and frozen, that have been submerged or splashed with flood waters, as well as any that have not been properly refrigerated.
- Canned food containers should be cleaned with detergent and warm water, then disinfected in a weak bleach solution before opening.

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Washington Department of Transportation

Drivers who are ready for the weather and drive safely help WSDOT and themselves. One spin-out can block traffic for hours and cause additional incidents. And, clearing incidents can also take our crews away from road-clearing activities.

Here's what drivers can do to prepare:

- Drivers should carry chains and drive slow.
- Give you give yourself extra time to reach your destination safely.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have potential to develop black ice that makes driving hazardous.

Know Before You Go:

- Get information from www.wsdot.wa.gov before you leave your home or office.
- 511 - This driver information phone line provides current traffic, incident and closure information. TTY users can call 1-800-833-6388. Out-of-state callers can access the information at call 1-800-695-ROAD (7623).
- Mountain pass conditions are available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/.
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter, drivers can find WSDOT's winter driving-related information, including preparing a vehicle for winter driving, safe driving tips and mountain pass travel advisories. The WSDOT winter site also offers information about chains, winter tires and how WSDOT maintenance crews work in winter weather.
- On WSDOT's website, www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather, drivers can look roadway temperatures and see camera images from across the state.
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts, a map shows highway incidents and closures.
- Sign up for news. WSDOT offers subscribers more than 25 specialized e-mail alerts, including news and information for freight haulers, construction related traffic revisions, project updates from all around the state, and timely updates on pass conditions. Visit www.wsdot.wa.gov and click the link for "E-mail updates."
- Twitter users can add WSDOT to their personal accounts at: <http://twitter.com/wsdot/>. Go to www.wsdot.wa.gov/inform/twitter for more details.

On the Road:

- Overhead and roadside electronic signs
- Highway advisory radio - WSDOT advises drivers to program 530AM and 1610AM on your radio.

Washington Department of Ecology

In the event of widespread power outages, people turn to woodstoves and fireplaces as their primary source of heat. To help reduce the amount of pollution from burning wood, take the following steps:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Be sure your firewood has been split and dried for at least one year. Store it under cover.
- Never burn wet, painted, stained or treated wood; colored newsprint; plastic; garbage; diapers; or magazines.
- Burn small, hot fires. This helps the wood burn completely and cleanly.
- Never allow the fire to smolder. This wastes wood, produces little heat, and causes a lot of smoke.
- Make sure your fire gets enough air. Dampering down too much can cause smoldering. You can tell if your fire has enough air by checking the smoke coming from your chimney. You should see only heat waves. If you see smoke, increase the air supply to your fire.
- Make sure your wood stove is the right size for its space. A stove that is too large for the space it is heating will have to be damped down, causing more smoke.
- Make sure your stove is properly installed.

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