

# Washington State EMERGENCY NEWS/Response



For immediate release

## News Release No. 2

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[www.wadisasternews.com](http://www.wadisasternews.com)

## Winter Storm Update #2

Washington  
Military  
Department

**CAMP MURRAY, WASH.** — Snowfall and wind speeds Saturday night did not appear as intense as first expected, but have still made a significant impact on Washington.

Washington  
Emergency  
Management  
Division

Four city and county emergency operations centers (EOCs) were open as of 8 a.m. Sunday monitoring storm conditions. Puget Sound Energy has reported scattered power outages in Western Washington. There were some major highway road closures due to poor visibility and safety concerns. Please check with the Department of Transportation for closures and approximate reopening times at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts/>.

Camp Murray,  
Washington

### WSP Urges Motorists to Avoid Travel Unless Absolutely Necessary

[www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov)

Washington State Patrol troopers around the state responded to more than 750 collisions in the 24 hours ending at 7am Sunday. Although that is about six times the normal number, State Patrol communications centers report that the overnight hours went better than expected.

“It appears that people heeded our request to stay at home through the overnight hours,” said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. “But conditions are still poor and are likely to remain so for most of the day. We’d urge people to avoid going out on the roads unless it’s absolutely necessary.”

Batiste urged those who must go out to be prepared with food, water and warm clothing or a sleeping bag in their car. During the same 24 hour period troopers responded to nearly 800 stranded motorists.

“If freezing rain materializes even we will have trouble getting to you,” Batiste said. “You need to be prepared to survive in your vehicle for much longer than on a normal day.”

Motorists who find themselves stranded are urged to stay with their vehicles. The shelter of the car is good protection against the elements, and those walking outside their vehicles risk being struck by other out-of-control cars.

### Power Outages and Shelters

There were fourteen shelters were open Saturday night — eight in Pierce, one in Cowlitz, four in King, and one in Mason counties.

With the amount of snow that has fallen there is still a threat of power outages. During power outages, the use of generators and alternative heat sources raises the public health concern of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. CO is found in combustion fumes produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. It can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces

- more -

and can quickly poison people and animals. You can find more information at the Emergency Management Web site – <http://emd.wa.gov/preparedness/CarbonMonoxideDanger.shtml>

- NEVER use generators indoors or in a garage, carport or basement. Generators can produce large amounts of carbon monoxide that can build up to dangerous levels in minutes. Keep your generator outdoors and well away from windows, doors and air intakes. For proper use of a generator take a look at this video – [http://emd.wa.gov/preparedness/videos/video\\_generatorsafety.shtml](http://emd.wa.gov/preparedness/videos/video_generatorsafety.shtml)
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, camper, or any enclosed space.
- Always open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat your home.
- Do not use unvented gas or kerosene space heaters in enclosed spaces.
- Install battery-powered CO detectors in your home.
- Read product directions for other important safety information.

### **How to Recognize CO Poisoning**

- Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

For more information go to [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov) or [www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm)

### **Exposure to Prolonged Cold -- Know What Signs to Look for in Hypothermia**

With extended exposure to low indoor temperatures, the very young and elderly are susceptible to hypothermia. A fact sheet (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/generalfactsheets/hypothermia.htm>) by the Washington State Department of Health explains the signs of hypothermia and what action to take should hypothermia occur.

### **Food Safety -- Keep Foods Safe During Power Outages**

Power outages can affect refrigeration and safe cooking practices. More than 250 diseases can be caused by bacteria found in contaminated raw or undercooked food, such as meat, milk, eggs, fish or shellfish. Proper storage and cooking of these foods can help prevent food-borne illness. A fact sheet (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Topics/Foodpowr.htm>) by the Washington State Department of Health addresses food product safety.

### **Stay off the phone unless there is a critical need.**

The State Enhanced 911 Office, in cooperation with local telephone carriers, reminds people across the state:

- To stay off the telephone unless you have a critical need to make a telephone call. Remember a FAX or a computer also uses a telephone line and its use may affect your ability to get immediate help in a life-threatening emergency.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 unless you need an emergency response from police, fire or emergency medical personnel.
- If you experience other types of problems not related to these emergency services, call the appropriate telephone number for those services.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 unnecessarily. 9-1-1 lines must be kept open for people who have a true emergency.
- If you pick up your telephone to make a call and do not hear dial tone, DO NOT HANG UP. Simply wait a few seconds, and you will get dial tone and be able to make your call.