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More severe weather coming throughout the state

Residents asked to prepare for possible severe weather effects

OLYMPIA – Significant rainfall is predicted for the next few days throughout the state of Washington. With the potential for floods coming our way, Washingtonians need to step up their preparedness efforts tonight and over the next few days.

The National Weather Service reports that a warm moist Pacific air mass coupled with a strong westerly flow will bring significant precipitation to Western Washington over the next 24 to 36 hours. Spokane can also expect to see warm and moist subtropical air, causing rain and melting snow. Periods of rain along with above freezing temperatures will continue through Thursday.

Significant hazards will be created by the warm rain, including risks of flooding, landslides, avalanches and potential roof collapses caused by snow and rain accumulation on roofs.

The avalanche threats will be greatest in the next 24 hours. Snow levels are expected to rise to 5000-8000 feet, causing extreme avalanche danger for the Olympics and Cascades. The risk of landslides also will be greatest on Wednesday. The rain will then cause a flood threat for nearly all Western Washington rivers and streams beginning Wednesday and peaking on Thursday.

Flood impacts may include the need to close US-12 at Randle and I-5 in Lewis County.

The significant roof loads caused by snow and rain in Spokane has resulted in an activation of the Washington National Guard. Up to 200 soldiers and airmen are being deployed to the Spokane area to assist with snow removal efforts, particularly on school rooftops to decrease the risk of collapsing roofs. Spokane school officials have been evaluating school facilities to ensure that buildings and the surrounding areas are safe before allowing students in the schools.

Governor Gregoire's office, the Washington National Guard, state Emergency Management Division, the Washington State Patrol and the state Department of Transportation are urging residents to take preventive actions now to minimize the threats of this severe weather.

Disaster preparedness information is available from the Washington Emergency Management Division at:

http://www.wadisasternews.com/posted/1105/Emergency_Resource_Guide_2007.139970.pdf.

Scroll down to p. 37 for information on floods and p. 38 for guidance on landslides.

For more information about driving conditions please visit: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

For more emergency information please visit www.wadisasternews.com

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