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Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON

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## State agencies responding to weather emergencies

*State officials to tour affected areas*

**OLYMPIA** – As predicted, heavy rains escalated from yesterday into today, especially in Western Washington, where many rivers are flooding. In Eastern Washington, rains today heighten concerns about heavy snow loads on the roofs of homes, businesses and public buildings, especially schools.

Gov. Chris Gregoire has arrived in Germany, where she is visiting recuperating servicemen and women at a hospital near Ramstein Air Force Base prior to her return to the state tomorrow. She was briefed earlier today by her senior cabinet, Emergency Management officials and the Washington State Patrol. Gregoire asked Lt. Gov. Brad Owen and other cabinet members to tour the flood damage in her absence.

In response to the emergencies, Owen and Brigadier General Gary Magonigle will visit Spokane to meet with local officials and view the damage caused by the record snowfall. Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond, Washington State Patrol Deputy Chief Paul Beckley, and the Governor's Chief of Staff Cindy Zehnder will visit flood threatened areas in Western Washington.

The state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated to help respond to the statewide flooding and significant landslide and avalanche hazards.

Today through Thursday there will be steady to heavy rain across the state. The Cascades and Olympics could get as many as 10 or more inches. The Southwest interior and coast could receive up to 6 inches. In Eastern Washington, rainfall and snowmelt will create the potential for small stream and urban flooding.

Major flooding is ongoing on 8-10 rivers in Western Washington, with record levels predicted for the Puyallup River near the town of Orting and Newaukum River near Chehalis.

Flood impacts have already forced the closure of some major highways, and could cause the closure of 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](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 road conditions please visit: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

For more emergency information please visit: [www.wadisasternews.com](http://www.wadisasternews.com)

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