

Washington State EMERGENCY NEWS/Response



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Division

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Flooding Storm Update #9

CAMP MURRAY, WASH.— Drier weather and receding flood waters predominate statewide.

The state, one tribe, 13 counties, and 17 cities emergency operations centers (EOCs) remain open 24/7 monitoring flooding issues related to the recent rainstorm. Seven EOCs have returned to day operations. Eighteen counties and 12 cities declared emergencies during January 2009 related to flooding.

Today, Gov. Chris Gregoire, along with US Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray, US Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, and state emergency response officials will be briefed on Washington's flood damage. Gov. Gregoire will hold a press briefing at Boeing Field before touring the flood damage in Pierce and Lewis counties.

Flooding

In Western Washington, six rivers remain in flood status with Chehalis, Snohomish and Snoqualmie rivers forecasted to remain above the major flooding threshold for the next 48 hours, according to the National Weather Service <http://www.weather.gov/ahps/>. In Eastern Washington, the Yakima and Walla Walla rivers remain in flood status.

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) issued a boil water advisory for several communities affected by floods. See http://www.doh.wa.gov/Publicat/2009_news/09-004.htm.

Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) reports residents who want to burn debris from recent floods should contact Ecology or their local clean air agency for rules and permit information.

Shelters

Twenty-two American Red Cross shelters housing 237 individuals and 11 independent shelters were reported open Thursday night, plus eight livestock and three pet shelters. Consolidation of shelters is anticipated as people and animals return back to their homes.

Road Closures

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reports Snoqualmie Pass eastbound is open and westbound will reopen midday today. Interstate 5 in Chehalis reopened at noon for freight traffic. The freeway will open to passenger cars later in the day. White Pass is open but US-12 remains closed west of Packwood. Blewett pass remains closed. As of 10 a.m. today, 85 sections of state highway have reopened. There are 39 sections still closed and 12 restricted. For details, call 5-1-1 or visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts/>.

Report your Damage

Local EOCs are beginning to collect preliminary damage assessments from home, farm and business owners. Whether you are a home, farm or business owner – insured or uninsured – remember to report your damages to your local emergency management agency.

WEMD will begin a preliminary damage assessment process with local and federal officials on Monday.

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The following are recommendations for dealing with flooding and landslide situations.

After a Flood

- Stay away from flood waters and downed power lines.
- Wear gloves and boots when cleaning up.
- Open all doors and windows. Use fans if possible to air out the building.
- Wash all clothes and linens in hot water.
- Discard mattresses and stuffed furniture; they can't be adequately cleaned.
- Wash dirt and mud from walls, counters and hard surfaced floors with soap and water. Disinfect by wiping surfaces with a solution of one cup bleach per gallon of water.
- Discard all food, cosmetics and medicines that have come into contact with floodwater. Canned foods are alright, but thoroughly wash the can before opening.
- If your well is flooded, your tap water is probably unsafe. If you have public water, the health department will let you know — through radio and television — if your water is not safe to drink. Until your water is safe, use clean bottled water. Learn how to purify water. If you have a well, learn how to decontaminate it.
- Do not use your septic system when water is standing on the ground around it. The ground below will not absorb water from sinks or toilets. When the soil has dried, it is probably safe to again use your septic system. To be sure, contact your local health department.
- If your basement is flooded, pump it out gradually (about 1/3 of the water per day) to avoid damage. The walls may collapse and the floor may buckle if the basement is pumped out while the surrounding ground is still waterlogged.
- Individuals with manufactured homes should remove the rodent barrier and insulation from under the structure. This will allow the floor to dry out and minimize damage and warping. The Department of Labor and Industries has a checklist with more tips at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/FAS/default.asp>.
- As floodwaters recede, watch out for weakened road surfaces.

After a Landslide

- Stay away from the slide area; there may be a danger of additional slides and flooding.
- Help your neighbors who may require special assistance – infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities. Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide area. Give first aid.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for emergency information.
- Check for damaged utility lines. Report any damage to the utility company.
- Check the building foundation, chimney and surrounding land for damage.

Stay off the phone unless there is a critical need.

- 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 or 2-1-1.

For more information, see the [EMD Emergency Resource Guide](http://emd.wa.gov/publications/documents/2008Emergency_Resource_Guide.pdf) at http://emd.wa.gov/publications/documents/2008Emergency_Resource_Guide.pdf

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