

Washington State EMERGENCY NEWS/Response



For immediate release

News Release No. 5

Jan. 8, 2009, 12:30 a.m.

Contact: Mark Clemens, public information officer

Media Line: 800-688-8955

www.wadisasternews.com

Flooding Storm Update #5

Washington
Military
Department

Washington
Emergency
Management
Division

Camp Murray,
Washington

www.emd.wa.gov

CAMP MURRAY, WASH.—Significant rainfall on top of recent snowfall is causing flooding throughout the state. Seventeen counties, ten cities, and two tribal emergency operations centers (EOCs) are open. Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Cowlitz, Jefferson, Kittitas, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Wahkiakum and Whatcom Counties plus the cities of North Bonneville, Orting, Shelton, Snoqualmie, South Prairie, Spokane, Sumner and Wilkeson have declared emergencies. The Governor's Proclamation of Emergency signed Dec. 24, 2008 continues supporting local jurisdictions in their response to this storm emergency.

Record Flooding

Flood warnings are in effect today through Friday for 14 counties in Western Washington and seven in Eastern Washington. Twenty-four rivers are projected to experience flooding in the next 24-48 hours. Several rivers will be near record flood levels.

<http://ahps2.wrh.noaa.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=sew>

Evacuations

Voluntary evacuations are recommended for the cities of Fife, Kelso, Naselle, Orting, Packwood, Randle, Snoqualmie, South Kelso and Stanwood plus Riverside Fire District 10 in east Pierce County.

The following shelters are open:

- Chelan County – Wenatchee Shelter;
- Cowlitz County – Kelso's Cowlitz County Expo and First Presbyterian Church, and Woodland's High School, Packwood Community Presbyterian Church, New Life Fellowship Church, Kalama High School;
- Grays Harbor – Oakville High School, Montesano's Church of God;
- King County – Preston's Community Center, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church;
- Kittitas County – Cle Elum's Upper Kittitas County Senior Center and Ellensburg's St. Andrews Catholic Church;
- Lewis County – Centralia LDS church, Oakview Grange, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Morton Elementary School, Packwood Community Presbyterian Church;
- Pacific County – Ocean Park Community Center;
- Pierce County – Bonney Lake's Prairie Ridge Community Center and Senior Center, Buckley Community Center, Calvary Community Church, Fife's Surprise Lake Middle School, Graham's Evergreen Presbyterian Church, Lakewood's First Baptist Church, Puyallup's Bethany Baptist Church, Nazarene Church, Edgewood Community Church, and Surprise Lake Middle School;
- Skagit – St. Catherine Catholic Mission, Concrete High School;
- Snohomish County – Arlington's Free Methodist Church, Concrete's First Presbyterian Church, St. Catherine Catholic Mission, Concrete High School, Monroe's Rock Church, Stanwood's Assembly of God;
- Thurston County – Rochester's LDS church;
- Wahkiakum County – Cathlamet Fire Hall;
- Whatcom County – Bellingham's Rome Grange, Everson/Nugent's Corner Fire Station.

Livestock shelters have opened in Pierce County at Frontier Park and Puyallup Fairgrounds, plus a pet shelter at the Sumner Veterinary Center. Snohomish County opened a livestock shelter at the Evergreen Fairgrounds and Thurston County has opened the Thurston County Fairgrounds. Please contact 2-1-1 regarding livestock and pet shelter status.

Road Closures

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reports Interstate-5 in Chehalis is closed from mile post 68-88 until further notice. Interstate-5 at Fife remains open, travelers should check Thursday morning for its status.

Major highway road closures reported include State Route (SR) 11, SR 106, SR 410, SR 539, SR 9, SR 546, SR 202, SR 162, SR 112, SR 165, SR 10, SR 8 and SR 20 due to mudslides, water over roadway, roadcuts and safety concerns. Please check with the WSDOT website for closures and approximate reopening times at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts/> or call 5-1-1.

Evacuation Advisory

- Residents who have not evacuated flood areas are encouraged to do so as long as they can do so safely. Due to widespread flooding throughout western Washington, resources for rescue will be extremely limited. Take responsibility for yourself and your family and evacuate now.
- If you cannot evacuate safely, shelter in place.
- If you have a life and death emergency, call 911 to report your emergency.

Call 2-1-1 for Non-Emergency Information

Non-emergency information and referral inquiries can be made by calling 2-1-1 (available M-F 8am-5pm).

Travel Points

- Don't drive through standing water or moving water.
- Consider delaying long trips until the flooding has receded. It's likely that cross-state travel will be difficult for at least a couple of days. You don't want to get half-way there and find yourself stranded by floodwater. Even if you're at a safe location, it might not be possible to return home.
- If you must travel, go properly equipped. Have food and water for every person in the car, along with warm clothing or sleeping bags. If you do get stranded, stay with your car unless it's threatened by rising flood waters.

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.

###