



Washington
Military
Department
Emergency
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Division

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www.emd.wa.gov

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Winter weather preparedness tips from Washington state

OLYMPIA – State emergency management officials today urged Washingtonians to get themselves ready for cold temperatures, snow and possible power outages this weekend.

“The National Weather Service predicts much of the state can expect a wintry onslaught of high winds, coastal area flooding, cold temperatures and snow starting Friday. This allows all of us a few days to prepare for winter weather conditions,” stated Gov. Chris Gregoire.

Washington Emergency Management Division

“The approach of the season’s first winter storm means it’s a good time to review emergency preparedness for homes, businesses and schools,” said Jim Mullen, director, Washington Emergency Management Division. “Check and restock those all-important 72-hour emergency kits with fresh water, food, prescription medication, flashlight and radio batteries, and all the rest of your emergency supplies,”

Preparedness information is available in several languages at:

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_travel_preparedness.shtml

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_infocus_winter.shtml

Take time to watch WEMD’s Generator Safety/Carbon Monoxide video at:

http://www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/videos/video_generatorsafety.shtml

Washington Department of Health

Carbon Monoxide poisoning is always a concern during power outages. It’s a poisonous gas that cannot be seen or smelled. It can kill a person in minutes. During Washington’s 2006 wind storm, eight people died and around 400 people were treated for carbon monoxide poisoning.

To avoid carbon monoxide, never use generators or other gasoline-powered equipment indoors, in garages, in carports, or near open windows. Don’t use generators unless you have carbon monoxide detectors in place. If the detector goes off, your generator is too close and should be moved. Also, never cook or heat inside using a charcoal or gas grill. Local health agencies have fact sheets available about carbon monoxide. This information is also available in several languages on the Department of Health’s Web site (www.doh.wa.gov).

Washington Department of Transportation

Drivers who are ready for the weather and drive safely help WSDOT and themselves. On ice and snow, take it slow. We offer information at www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter about how to prepare your car and yourself. Know the weather forecast, maintain your car, install the proper tires, and prepare yourself for winter conditions. One spin out can block traffic for hours and cause additional incidents. Clearing these incidents can also take our crews away from road-clearing activities.

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Washington Department of Transportation

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Here's what drivers can do to prepare:

- Plan extra time to cross all mountain passes, including heavily-traveled routes such as I-90 Snoqualmie Pass, US 2 Stevens Pass, and US 12 White Pass.
- Carry chains and know the traction and chain requirements - Mountain pass traction and chain requirements are available on highway advisory signs and highway advisory radio. When those advisories call for chains, drivers who don't chain up will face a \$500 penalty.

Know Before You Go:

- WSDOT offers several ways to get up-to-date traffic and construction information from our Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov before you leave your home or office.
- Sign up for news. Follow media releases, read the WSDOT blog, sign up for WSDOT's listserv and RSS feeds, see WSDOT pictures on Flickr and videos on YouTube at www.wsdot.wa.gov/news
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather drivers can look at weather forecasts and road temperatures throughout the state
- At www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts, the color-coded map shows statewide traffic conditions, including construction delays and highway incidents.
- Drivers can access Seattle area traffic flow map, ferry schedules, mountain pass reports, and current travel times from their PDAs or cell phones by logging on to www.wsdot.wa.gov/small/
- 511 - This driver information phone line provides real-time traffic, incident and closure information. TTY users can call 1-800-833-6388.

On the Road:

- Overhead and roadside electronic signs - Overhead and freeway signs provide emergency and incident alerts and, in some Seattle-area locations during rush hours, point-to-point travel times
- Highway advisory radio - Yellow signs with flashing lights alert drivers to tune into radio frequencies airing construction updates.

WSDOT advises drivers to program 530AM and 1610AM on your radio.

Washington Department of Ecology

For homes that rely on a woodstove for heat, take the following steps to reduce smoke and wood pollution:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. Be sure your firewood has been split and dried for at least one year. Store it under cover.
- Never burn wet, painted, stained or treated wood; colored newsprint; plastic; garbage; diapers; or magazines.
- Burn small, hot fires. This helps the wood burn completely and cleanly.
- Never allow the fire to smolder. This wastes wood, produces little heat, and causes a lot of smoke.
- Make sure your fire gets enough air. Dampering down too much can cause smoldering. You can tell if your fire has enough air by checking the smoke coming from your chimney. You should see only heat waves. If you see smoke, increase the air supply to your fire.
- Make sure your wood stove is the right size for its space. A stove that is too large for the space it is heating will have to be damped down, causing more smoke.
- Make sure your stove is properly installed.

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