

Media Advisory – Oct. 27, 2008

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County urges residents to prepare for fall/winter floods

Executive declares Oct. 26-Nov. 1 as Flood Preparedness Week

County Executive Aaron Reardon has declared the week of Oct. 26-Nov. 1 as Flood Preparedness Week in Snohomish County, urging residents to ready themselves and their families for inclement weather this fall and winter.

October is the beginning of the flood season for Snohomish County, usually running through the end of March. During the remaining days of October and the month of November, residents should prepare for potential flooding.

“I encourage all county residents to get involved in their community’s flood awareness and safety efforts and to learn more about safety preparedness,” Reardon said. “A little effort now could mean a lot less worry later.”

Since 2006, three presidential declarations of disaster have been issued for Snohomish County – two for flooding and one for a serious windstorm. Snohomish County historically experiences catastrophic flooding on average every two to four years.

During the past decade, large floods have occurred about once every three years with minor flooding happening annually. Flooding in Snohomish County can occur as flash floods, tributary flooding, urban flooding and tidal flooding.

The county’s Department of Emergency Management has been coordinating with cities, emergency agencies and relief organizations to prepare for this season’s flood events.

“Training now means we’ll be ready if a flood event actually occurs,” said John Pennington, the county’s Emergency Management director. “Cooperation with the multiple agencies throughout the county will ensure we limit the amount of damage and personal property loss during a flood.”

The American Red Cross of Snohomish County also has arrangements with more than 200 facilities in Snohomish County where emergency shelters can be opened during any flood event.

According to the American Red Cross, there are several steps individuals and families can take to prepare. Among them are stocking an emergency kit, creating an emergency plan and keeping informed of conditions.

“Preparedness is the key to lessening stress and trauma that can be brought on by a flood,” said Chuck Morrison, executive director of the Red Cross’s Snohomish County

Chapter. “I urge all residents of Snohomish County to also be ‘Red Cross Ready’ by having an emergency preparedness kit of items needed when disaster strikes, an emergency plan of what to do and to stay informed.”

Further information on flooding and flood safety can be found at:

www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Public_Works/Divisions/SWM/Services/River_Flooding/default.htm

www.emd.wa.gov/preparedness/prep_floodsafe.shtml

www.snohomishcounty.redcross.org/index.php?pr=Preparedness_Links

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Snohomish County DEM and the American Red Cross of Snohomish County urge all residents to have an emergency preparedness kit, an emergency plan and a way to stay informed.

Suggestions include:

Stocking an emergency kit

- First aid kit and essential medications, including copies of prescriptions. A three-day supply is recommended.
- Canned food and can opener. Choose high protein non-salty foods.
- At least three gallons of water per person per day.
- Protective clothing, rainwear and bedding or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries.
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.
- Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)
- Food, water and special items for your family pets.

Making a plan

- Meet with your family to create a plan. Remember, when disaster strikes, members may be home or away from home.
- Pick places to meet. (A place outside your home if the emergency requires you to vacate your home, and a place in your neighborhood, at a motel or an emergency shelter in case you are away and can't return home.)
- Be sure to let out-of-town relatives know where you are and that you and your family are safe. Ask them to help keep you informed of weather conditions.
- Post emergency phone numbers by telephones.
- Teach children how and when to call 911.
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Keep important family documents in a waterproof container.
- Have family members learn basic safety measures like first aid and CPR.

Be informed

- The American Red Cross and Snohomish County DEM welcome inquiries on how to prepare for emergencies, including flooding. Free brochures are available and trained disaster-services personnel are ready to answer questions and offer helpful tips.
- Listen to your radio for information on assistance that might be provided by Snohomish County DEM, the Red Cross and other agencies.
- Learn the terms used on the radio or television that warn of potential flooding conditions.
- Remember, if there is a flood or flash flood warning, get to higher ground right away!
- Stay away from flooding areas. Even if it seems safe, the water may be moving faster than it looks.