

PCEMA

Pacific County Emergency Management Agency

Preparedness Post

Volume 6, Issue 6 September-October 2017

Welcome Ameri-Corps Member Roger Jones

CERT Training Begins October 21st in Raymond

How to Respond to a Tornado Warning

Great Shakeout Earthquake Drill October 19th at 10:19 a.m.

Checklist: Time to Start Winterizing!



NOAA Photo

Fall Brings New Weather Hazards— Be Prepared!

Front Page

Be Alert to Potential Fall Weather Hazards

Autumn isn't all picturesque foliage and pumpkin spice lattes— with the changing season comes more unpredictable weather and all the challenges associated with it. Learn more about typical hazardous weather for this season below:

Thick Fog

This is the time of year when fog becomes more of an issue on roads. Drivers need to be cautious when they encounter fog, which is often a problem on morning commutes.

If you are able to stay off the road by simply not driving at all or by pulling over when it is extremely foggy, that is best. If you must drive or cannot pull over, here are some useful tips for driving in fog:

- **Keep your distance from other vehicles.** In ideal conditions, a minimum three second following distance is suggested. When visibility is decreased, that distance should be even larger.
- **Slow down.** Fog often causes traffic fatalities because people drive too fast and are unable to stop in time to avoid a collision.
- **Remain a consistent speed, signal early, and brake slowly.**
- **Ensure that you are seen.** Use your fog lights and low beams. High beams should not be used. They direct light up into the fog making it more difficult to see.
- **Remember that fog can leave the road slick.**
- **Use the fog line (the white line on the right side of the road) as a guide.**
- **If you can't see, pull over.** Be sure that you are completely off the road and use your hazard lights.

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Thick Fog View from above the Astoria-Megler Bridge. The water and roadway are shrouded in fog. Photo source unknown.



Damaging Wind Looking across Robert Bush Drive East (in South Bend) toward the hardwood mill, in November 2016. PCEMA Photo.



Heavy Rain A collapsed culvert on SR 4 near Nassel in January 2015. PCEMA Photo.

Front Page Continued

Be Alert to Potential Fall Weather Hazards

Damaging Wind

Windstorms occur in our region every year and can cause extensive damage to trees, power lines, and structures. Here are some useful tips for weathering a windstorm:

Before the Storm

- **Secure or remove outdoor objects.** Things such as lawn furniture, wind chimes, or garbage bins have potential to blow away and cause damage or injury.

During the Storm

- **If you are outdoors, move into a secure building.**
- **If you are indoors, move away from windows.** Go to the lower floors of multiple story buildings.

Driving Through the Storm

- **Hold the wheel firmly.** Be vigilant when driving in areas that are prone to strong wind gusts and avoid those areas when at all possible.
- **Keep your distance from other vehicles.** Strong winds can push cars over the centerline.
- **Watch out for higher-profile vehicles.** Large commercial trucks and even SUVs are more likely to be pushed across the road or overturned by strong winds.
- **Keep a lookout for debris.** Tree limbs, rocks, or roofing materials are all examples of things that could be blown into the road.
- **Know when it's too much.** If winds are so severe that you can't travel safely, get off the road and wait it out. Stop away from trees or other tall objects that could fall onto your car.

After the Storm

- **Avoid downed electric power lines, utility poles and trees.**
- **Evacuate damaged buildings.** Do not re-enter until declared safe by authorities.

Heavy Rain

Heavy rain can cause flooding, landslides, and dangerous road conditions. Read on and learn how to stay safe!

- **Know where it tends to flood.** If you live or frequent a low-lying area that often has standing water after a heavy rain, be prepared. Get sandbags ready and park vehicles out of the area.
- **Stay away from rushing water.** A small creek can quickly become a raging torrent after a heavy rain. Keep clear of waterways and other areas where fast moving water develops. These are places where people, pets, and possessions can be swept away.
- **Watch out in slide-prone areas.** Avoid places that have experienced landslides in the past, and be cautious near steep slopes.
- **Drive slow and steady!** Pull over if it is raining so hard that you cannot see.
- **Do not drive through flood waters.** Six inches of water can reach the bottom of most cars, which can cause loss of control or stalling. One foot of water will float most vehicles. Two feet of moving water can sweep away a vehicle.
- **Turn off the electricity if your home floods.** Electrical current passes easily through water. Even if the power is already out, turning off the electricity at your breaker box can ensure that the power won't be restored before you are ready.
- **Tread carefully.** After a flood, surfaces can be covered with slippery mud and other debris.

Severe Thunderstorm Triggers Tornado Warnings

On September 18th, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a series of Tornado Warnings for areas of Pacific County and elsewhere across the region. Ultimately there were no reports of a tornado touching down, though large hail, thunder and lightning, and heavy rain all indicated that a tornado was possible.



Left: Ominous clouds form in the distance as the thunderstorm moves up the river. Photo taken on the Astoria-Megler Bridge. Shared by Stephanie Fritts via Facebook.

Right: Large hail gathered from the storm. Photo from Trina Erickson via Facebook.

Tornado Preparedness and Response

- **Look for the following danger signs:**
 - dark, often greenish sky
 - large hail
 - a large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - a loud roar, similar to a freight train. (From FEMA <https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>)
- **TAKE COVER!** Move to a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows. If you are outdoors, in a mobile home, or in a vehicle, move to the closest substantial shelter and protect yourself from flying debris. (From the National Weather Service)

A Note about Tornado Warnings

Pacific County's reverse 911 system only alerts people in the path of the storm so that the volume of calls is lower and the warnings can be delivered in a more timely manner. We are able to do this because our system is integrated with the National Weather Service.

Why are there more tornado warnings now than ever before?

Over the last few years, many Pacific County residents have received Tornado Warnings advising them to "take shelter now" during severe thunderstorms. Because of the increasing frequency of these alerts, potential tornados appear to be a new phenomenon.

Though no one can say for certain, the National Weather Service (NWS) believes that new detection and forecast equipment, as well as improvements to the coastal doppler radar have allowed meteorologists to better monitor severe thunderstorms. Essentially, when the NWS sees weather hazards, they are obligated to predict them. New equipment and technology means that more gets picked up and therefore more gets reported and forecast.

These weather patterns have always been in existence off our coast. Unstable air over the water creates the elements necessary to form waterspouts and tornados, which typically weaken when they make landfall. These events do remain rare, though they have begun to seem more common. Though residents should be prepared to see more of these warnings in the future, it is important to remember that tornados are a real threat that should be taken seriously.



A waterspout spotted off of the Oregon Coast (Netarts) during the September 18th storm. Photo Credit: Richard Kittner

Great Shakeout Earthquake Drill October 19th

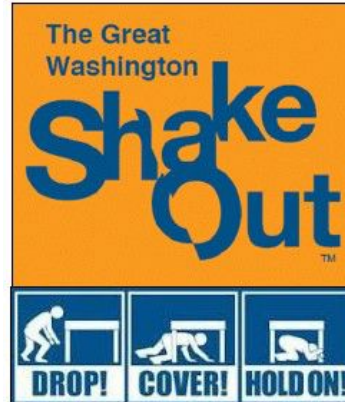
On October 19th at 10:19 a.m., millions of people across the world will practice how to drop, cover, and hold as participants in Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills. Wherever you are at 10:19 a.m. on October 19th, you should drop, cover, and hold for at least 60 seconds, as if an earthquake were actually occurring.

To participate in the ShakeOut you won't need to leave work or school. Participating at places where you spend a lot of time is a good idea! Pacific County residents are encouraged to participate in the Great Washington ShakeOut by registering at www.shakeout.org/washington. Over one million Washington residents have already registered!

3,625 people are registered in Pacific County.

Be advised that many of those participating in Pacific County are from schools, government offices, and businesses, so services or traffic may be briefly disrupted.

The Pacific County All Hazard Alert Broadcast (AHAB) outdoor sirens will also be tested as part of the Great Washington ShakeOut. The actual tsunami siren tone (a three minute wail) will be used. The siren tone will be preceded and followed by a verbal message. NOAA weather radios set to receive the required monthly test will also activate during the Great ShakeOut.



Drop, Cover, & Hold On

October 19th at
10:19 a.m.

[www.shakeout.org/
washington](http://www.shakeout.org/washington)



Connect with us: **PCEMA is on Facebook!**

www.facebook.com/pcema

Free CERT Training Scheduled for October

PCEMA is offering a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training course in Raymond (see training schedule below).

The course will be held in Raymond, and specific location information will be sent out at time of registration. Pre-registration is required and is limited to 24 participants. Participants under the age of 18 must have parent/guardian permission to attend. To register or for more information, contact PCEMA Director Scott McDougall at (360) 875 or 642-9338 or email smcdougall@co.pacific.wa.us.

The CERT program is an all-risk, all-hazard training. This valuable course is designed to help you protect yourself, your family, your neighbors, and your neighborhood in an emergency situation. CERT members receive 29 hours of initial training provided free of charge. The course is taught with classroom instruction for the first three days and practical exercises during the last day.

DATES & TIMES

- Saturday, October 21, 2017 - 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday, October 22, 2017 - 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 28, 2017 - 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday, October 29, 2017 - 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

The AmeriCorps



Welcome Roger!



PCEMA is pleased to announce that Roger Jones recently joined our team as the 2017-2018 AmeriCorps Service Member. Stay tuned for more information about the programs and projects he will be coordinating.

Roger hails from Illinois and recently graduated from Northern Illinois University with a BA in Environmental Studies with a focus on policy. He says he is “just really excited to be here and to serve the community and the county.”

“The reason that I decided to do AmeriCorps is that I believe that everyone has a duty to the country. This lined up with the fact that I have a strong interest in helping others.”

His main goal for the service term “is to understand mitigation and the vulnerability of a community caused by disasters.”

Roger says that he loves to go hiking and ride his bike on trails and hopes to “experience what this region has to offer.”

Welcome to PCEMA and Pacific County Roger!

The Time to Prepare for Winter Weather is NOW!

- **Bring outdoor belongings indoors.** Things like patio furniture or hanging plants can become projectiles during a windstorm.
- **Prepare for possible isolation.** Be sure that you have a fully stocked emergency supply kit, plenty of non-perishable food, and keep a sufficient amount of heating fuel (i.e. firewood or propane.)
- **Keep the cold out.** Extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.
- **Check your roof and gutters.** Look for loose, missing, or damaged shingles and flashing around vents to reduce the risk of flying debris or water damage. Make sure that gutters are solidly attached.
- **Protect your foundation.** Clear rain gutters and make sure that water drains away from the house.
- **Protect Pipes.** Insulate your pipes and let water drip from faucets during cold weather to avoid pipes bursting.
- **Test your sump pump.** If your home has a basement, make sure your sump pump is in working order to help prevent basement flooding.
- **Check or install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Keep spare batteries on hand to ensure your detectors are always operational.
- **Make sure your fire extinguishers are charged and accessible.** With wood stoves and heaters in use during the cold months, it is especially important to have fire extinguishers handy.
- **Check your chimney.** To prevent chimney fires, make sure your chimney is clean and clear of obstructions (like bird nests) before starting the first fire of the season.
- **Check your heaters.** Electric wall heaters need dust and lint removed, and heater covers should be cleaned. Portable electric heaters need to be checked to make sure the tip-over switch works. Furnaces need frequent filter changes during the high-use months.
- **Get to know your generator.** Make sure you have a safe place to run the generator, and that everything is already set up to connect it with your home wiring system. Remember never to run it indoors!
- **Learn how to shut off your electricity.** If your home floods, it is important that you are able to locate your breaker box and are familiar with how to cut power to the house. Remember never to turn power back on after the flood until an electrician has checked the system.
- **Learn how to shut off water valves.** Being able to quickly locate and shut off your home’s water supply could save your home from serious water damage should a pipe burst.

PCEMA

Pacific County Emergency Management Agency

Contacts & Info.

The Pacific County Amateur Radio Club meets every second Saturday of the month at Hunter's Inn, Naselle - 9:00 a.m.
All Hazards Alert Broadcast (AHAB) Sirens occur the first Monday of every month at noon.

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LIKE the PCEMA Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pcema to follow frequent emergency management and preparedness dialogue.

FOLLOW @PCEOCNews on Twitter to get updates from the Pacific County EOC when it is activated. If you are not signed up for Twitter, you can receive the same information via text message. Just text "follow PCEOCNews" to 40404.

RECEIVE the latest emergency management information, hazardous weather notices, and monthly newsletter by signing up for the PCEMA Weather Warning list. Provide your name via email to PCEMA staff and include the word "Subscribe" as the subject.

READ the latest emergency management information and press releases on our website at [http://
www.pacificcountysheriff.com/emergency-
management.html](http://www.pacificcountysheriff.com/emergency-management.html)

VISIT the PCEMA website at <http://www.pacificcountysheriff.com/plans.html> for valuable preparedness materials and to learn about hazards prone to Pacific County.

Emergency Notification

Sign Up for the Emergency Notification System!

Residents can register cellphones on the PCEMA website. Use the QRL code below to sign up using your smart phone!

In the event of an emergency, this system may be used by emergency response personnel to notify specific homes and businesses at risk.



To view tsunami inundation maps, visit:
[http://
www.pacificcountysheriff.co
m/plans.html](http://www.pacificcountysheriff.com/plans.html)

