



Grays Harbor Storm Recovery INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

On behalf of the City of Aberdeen / City of Hoquiam / Grays Harbor County

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Friday, January 30, 2015

LOCAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM: The Homeland Security Region 3 Incident Management Team has transitioned to a local Incident Management Team. Chief Leonard Johnson of GH Fire District #2 is the incident commander with Chief Tom Hubbard of the Aberdeen Fire Department as his deputy commander. The new IMT will continue to operate in conjunction with the Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP) on behalf of the City of Aberdeen, City of Hoquiam and Grays Harbor County.

HEALTH IMPACT OF MOLD: Citizens who have not yet taken steps to mitigate flood damage need to be aware of the danger of mold. Renters need to report the presence of mold to the landlord.

Anyone living in a home or apartment which has not already had significant flood mitigation and repair efforts could already be exposed to the growth of black mold. Mold may grow out-of-sight within closed areas such as under floors or inside of walls but will still contaminate air quality in the entire structure.

The presence of wet conditions within the structure may lead to the growth of mold, viruses and bacteria; these microorganisms can have a significant and possibly deadly impact on the health of persons- especially medically sensitive groups such as infants, the disabled or the elderly. Persons impacted may experience stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing or skin irritation; continued exposure or those allergic to microorganisms may have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.

Citizens experiencing physical impact from mold exposure are encouraged to seek medical attention.

Additional information can be found at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/>. Homes or buildings which significant mold contamination should be reported to the city or county building department (according to where it is located) because the structure may become uninhabitable.

DANGER OF ASBESTOS: In addition to mold, citizens need to be aware of the health impact of asbestos when working on flood damage in homes or buildings. Many common household materials- including recently purchased materials- can contain asbestos, including drywall, flooring, carpet glue, wall texture, pipe insulation and ceiling tiles.

Asbestos regulations apply to ALL structures, including residential homes.

Asbestos is regulated by the Olympic Region Clean Air Authority (ORCAA) because airborne asbestos particles not only can pose a health risk to residents, but also anyone who unwittingly handles contaminated building materials, such as volunteers, contractors or garbage disposal workers.

Before beginning any asbestos project, you must notify ORCAA at 360-539-7610 or 1-800-422-5623. An asbestos removal permit is required for the removal or disturbance of more than 10 square feet of any asbestos containing material. ORCAA currently charges a nominal fee for this permit, but a request to temporarily waive this fee is under consideration.





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If material is not tested for asbestos, it must be assumed to contain asbestos and handled as contaminated material. ORCAA maintains a list of asbestos contractors on its website at www.orcaa.org.

Through the generosity of donations, the Grays Harbor Community Foundation is currently working with CCAP to possibly cover the cost of some asbestos testing or permit fees to help encourage repairs to local housing damaged in the flood.

Asbestos containing material must be properly removed, bagged and reported before dumping. Illegally dumping asbestos contaminated materials in the garbage or at the transfer station places garbage workers at risk. Failure to follow state and federal asbestos regulations can result in fines ranging from \$200 to \$15,000.

REPORTING DISASTER IMPACT: It is critical all disaster related loss and damage estimates are reported to the state and FEMA. *The deadline for reporting all flood impact to the state is **February 5th**.*

There are damage reporting forms available at Aberdeen City Hall, Hoquiam City Hall and Grays Harbor County Emergency Management. Homeowners, renters, landlords and businesses are strongly encouraged to report all damage or loss of property on a damage form or citizens can complete an on-line form at the Grays Harbor County Department of Emergency Management website: <http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/DEM/Index.asp> or by calling 360-249-3911.

At this time, over 700 damage estimates have been reported to the state. Future state or federal assistance will depend on the number of homes and businesses impacted as well as the overall economic impact to our area. It is critical everyone reports damage not only to structures, but also to personal property (such as clothing, furniture or food) lost because of the rain storm and flooding.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION: A function within the Incident Management Team is volunteer coordination; this is currently being handled by Ed McGowan from the Grays Harbor County Sheriff's Department at 360-581-1182 or edmcgowan@co.grays-harbor.wa.us.

Ed McGowan is in direct contact with the state Department of Emergency Management regarding state volunteer groups interested in helping with disaster recovery. There have also been several local and regional volunteer organizations and church groups willing to assist with flood mitigation.

All volunteers who are referred out into the community to conduct flood assistance or mitigation will be signed up as a State Emergency Worker. All volunteer state emergency workers will have a simple background check so residents have peace of mind about who is in their home.

All volunteers enrolled as a state emergency worker will also receive Labor and Industries insurance protection should they be hurt while volunteering, such as stepping on a rusty nail or other injury. Volunteer state emergency workers will have identification from the IMT or participate within a group assigned by the IMT.





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Volunteers may choose to take on activities outside of this registration process with the Incident Management Team, but citizens need to understand these volunteers will not have background checks or L&I insurance coverage should they be injured on your property.

DEBRIS DUMPING VOUCHERS: There are free dumping vouchers available at Aberdeen City Hall, Hoquiam City Hall and Grays Harbor County Emergency Management for residents to dispose of items damaged in the flood.

Citizens may need to show proof of residency, but once the voucher is obtained, citizens can dump flood damaged property at the LeMay transfer station in Central Park at 4201 Olympic Highway- open Monday through Friday from 8AM to 5PM and 8AM to 4PM on Saturday.

Some dump vouchers may soon expire, but a new round of paid vouchers will be provided for the duration of the recovery effort or until funding is exhausted.

CONTRACTOR SCAMS: Whenever a disaster strikes a community, there is an outpouring of help and support; with this up swell comes scammers looking to take advantage of desperate people in desperate times.

Citizens should check the legitimacy of all contractors who offer services or work. Contractors must be bonded, state licensed and have insurance. Always make sure you have a written contract and never pay in advance or pay in full until the job is done. Ask for and check contractor references for jobs they have completed in the past. If the offer or work sounds “too good to be true” it probably is!

Contractors can be verified on the state Labor and Industries website at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/claimsins/fraudcomp/>. Fraudulent or unlicensed contractors can be reported by calling 1-888-811-5974.

LOW INTEREST FEDERAL LOANS: Starting on February 2nd, the United States Small Business Administration will be opening a Disaster Loan Outreach Center at the county’s Pearsall Building (where the county Health Department is located) at 2109 Sumner Avenue, Aberdeen.

Disaster loans are available for up to \$200,000 to homeowners to replace or replace damaged real estate; homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property.

The outreach center will be open Monday through Friday from 8AM to 4:30PM. The SBA offers low-interest federal disaster loans to businesses, homeowners, renters and most non-profit organizations that were affected by this disaster.

The loan outreach center will be staffed with SBA representatives to answer questions about the loans, explain the application process and help each individual complete a loan application. No appointment is necessary.





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DISASTER INFORMATION, RESOURCES AND HOUSING: Citizens impacted by the January 4-5 rainstorm and flooding are encouraged to call or visit the Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP) to receive updated information or referral to resources and services related to the flood recovery effort.

The direct line for FLOOD ASSISTANCE INFORMATION is 360-500-4551 or 1-800-828-4883. CCAP is located at 117 East Third Street in Aberdeen with services located on the second floor and hours of Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM. The CCAP office number is 360-533-5100.

CCAP is working with several resources to provide not only referral information, but they also can provide assistance with emergency shelter and housing. The American Red Cross is temporarily located at the CCAP offices and can offer housing assistance in conjunction with CCAP and other available funding.

The Grays Harbor Storm Recovery INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM will continue to work in conjunction with CCAP on behalf of the City of Aberdeen, City of Hoquiam and Grays Harbor County for the duration of the active period.

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