

Other Natural Hazards

Other Natural Hazards Affecting the Puget Sound Region

Other natural hazards to which residents of the Puget Sound region in Washington state are subject include volcanic eruptions, tsunamis or seiches, avalanches, droughts, floods and landslides.

Most of these hazards are due to the region's maritime climate. In this type of climate it is common for air temperatures to rise above freezing during cold winter months and for precipitation to change from snow to rain during mid-winter storm cycles. Temperatures in the region can often change by several degrees within minutes. These local storm conditions preclude avalanches, flooding and landslides.

It might be hard to believe that Washington state could be subject to periods of drought given its reputation for rain nine months out of the year. But periods of as little as 30 days where no measurable rainfall is recorded have resulted in crop failures as well as an increase in forest fires. Droughts and fires severely impact two of Washington's major industries: agriculture and timber.

The effects of these natural hazards can cause loss of life, property damage, and disruptions in power, utilities, transportation and shipping. Telephone systems (both cell and land line), sewer systems and natural gas lines can also be impacted and disrupted.

Due to the ongoing threat of these natural hazards to the public, education and awareness efforts should be increased. Residents should understand the warning signs and climatic indicators of the environment in which they live both locally and regionally as well as being prepared to be self sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours during an emergency.

The increasing population and new industries will also continue to tap Washington's resources and make our environment more susceptible to the effects of these natural hazards. Forethought in planning and development are crucial to forestalling the effects of some of these natural hazards upon ourselves. It is also important for residents to acquire adequate hazard insurance, be educated in fire response and safety measures, and emergency first aid procedures.

The links in the navigation bar (to the left) to each of the other regional natural hazards provide residents with general information as well as details about our vulnerability to these hazards and their effects upon us as families and communities. This information is provided to enable families and individuals to prepare family disaster plans that address the hazards to which they are most subject.