

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Following is information obtained from <http://sanjuandem.net/>, the web site of the San Juan County Department of Emergency Management, and www.72hours.org, a San Francisco emergency preparedness web-site. It has been slightly modified to make the recommendations more applicable to the conditions existing at the Orcas Highlands. Click on the above links for additional information.

Make a Plan

After a major disaster, it is unlikely that emergency response services will be able to immediately respond to everyone's needs so it's important to be prepared to take care of yourself, family, and neighbors. Although, San Juan County has pre-determined emergency (Red Cross) shelters, information concerning the actual location of the shelters will not be distributed until the time of an incident. (Shelters are usually located in community centers, schools, churches and other large facilities and the Department of Emergency Management must first get the facility open and stocked before officially opening the shelter. The information will be given out on its web page, via radio and/or TV, and possibly as an Emergency Alert System (EAS) Broadcast.) Consequently, the Department of Emergency Management advises San Juan County residents to plan to be on their own for at least seven days.

The following steps will help you prepare for any emergency:

Post your address number. Ensure that your address number is posted where emergency responders can see it, at the entrance to your driveway. Reflective materials are advised.

Workable Phone. Many phones do not work in a power outage. Have a phone that requires *only* a phone jack to operate. Portable phones require electricity and may not work in an emergency.

Battery Operated Radio. Keep a working, battery-operated radio handy to get up-to-date information.

Designate an out-of-area contact person. Try to select someone that is far enough away, preferably off-island or even out-of-state, that he/she will not be affected by the same emergency. Provide this person with the names and contact information of the people you want to keep informed of your situation. Instruct family members to call this person and tell them where they are. Long distance phone service is often restored sooner than local service.

Duplicate important documents and keep copies off-site, either in a safety deposit box or with someone you trust. Documents may include passports, drivers licenses, social security cards, wills, deeds, financial statements, insurance information and prescriptions.

Inventory valuables, in writing and with photographs or video. Keep copies of this information off-site with your other important documents.

Make a household/family plan. Involve all key people in planning.

Make your home safe. Attach large items of furniture that could fall over to the wall and don't place pictures, mirrors, or other large objects over the bed where they may fall on top of you during an earthquake.

Put together a disaster supply kit. Plan to have supplies for yourself and family for at least seven days following a disaster.

When planning, consider the special needs of children, seniors or people with disabilities, family members that don't speak English and pets.

Fuel. Keep your firewood close by and your fuel tanks topped off.

Blankets and Clothing. Have extra blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing on hand.

Generator. Keep your generator fueled and test it regularly. Ensure that the generator is connected properly so that it doesn't pose a hazard to emergency crews working to restore power.

Think before you travel. Call ahead before hitting the road. Get ferry, road, airport and pass information. Be prepared for cancelled ferries and flights. Keep food, water, clothing and other items in your car; you may end up sleeping in it.

Other Web Sites of Interest:

Weather www.wrh.noaa.gov/seattle (click on specific county or area desired) or

www.nws.noaa.gov/stormready

Emergency Preparedness: www.redcross.org/services/disaster

Earthquake Information: www.ess.washington.edu

Earthquake Preparedness: www.aap.org/family/frk/frkit25.htm

Post these numbers near your phone. It is a good idea to keep the same information on a card on your person.

MEDICAL

Orcas Medical Center - 360 376-2561

Dr. Olmstead message phone - 376-6707

Nurse Midwife Melinda Milligan - 376-4267

Orcas Family Practice - 376-7778

Eye Clinic - Dr. Chris White - 376-5310

Ray's Pharmacy - 376-2230 (*after hours, emergency only* - 376-3693)

SHERIFF

Orcas Substation

1323 Mt Baker Rd

PO Box 468

Eastsound, WA 98245

376-2207

Cellular calls dial 378-4141 for emergencies

Non-emergency all Islands - 378-4151

SERVICES & UTILITIES

Orcas Island Fire District Office - 376-2331

Opalco - power outages - 376-3500 (*after hour power outages* - 376-3599)

Eastsound Water Users - 376-2127

CenturyTel Phone Repair - 611

SeaTac Shuttle Service - 1-800-448-8443

LOCAL ROAD CONDITIONS

Orcas County Shop - 376-2505

Friday Harbor Shop - 378-2114

Lopez County Shop - 468-2273

Main Office - 370-0500

FERRY SERVICES

Washington State Ferries Direct Information - 1-888-808-7977 (*Internet - www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/*)
Orcas Landing - 376-6253
Friday Harbor - 378-8665
Lopez - 468-4095
Shaw - 468-2142

MAINLAND ROAD CONDITIONS

Washington State Travel Information – 511 (*Internet - wsdot.wa.gov/traveler*)
State Patrol Road Information - 1-360-658-2588

ANIMALS AND PET EMERGENCY

Orcas Animal Clinic (all animals) - 376-7838 (*emergency pager 1-800-212-6562*)
Wolf Hollow (wildlife information) - 378-5000
Orcas Island Animal Shelter - 376-6777

WHERE TO TUNE FOR INFORMATION

School closures and delays:

Radio - KGMI 790 AM, KAFE 104.3 FM, KLKI 1340 AM, KOMO 1000 AM
Television - KING TV Channel 5

General Orcas Road and Emergency:

KGMI 790 Am or KISM 92.9 FM
Ferry update info: KLKI 1340 AM

Red Cross:

San Juan County Red Cross - (360) 293-2911

Emergency Alert System

We're all familiar with the test "tone" on radio or TV that alerts us to a test of the Emergency Alert (formerly Broadcast) system. In a real disaster, this tone would alert us to vital information. This system is still in place, and local TV or radio (US based stations, not Canadian) is still a good source of local information in the time leading up to or following a major disaster. But, there's a better way: The EAS is now tied into the National Weather Service Radio system that we're familiar with as the source of the weather broadcasts we listen to from our weather radios at home or, even more commonly, on our boats. The latest versions of most weather radios now enable us to monitor emergency alerts that are sent out on this system, and to tune our radios so that we only receive alerts specifically targeted to San Juan County. This system is affordable, simple, and reliable, and the Department of Emergency Management highly recommends that each home, office, or other community gathering spot have an EAS compatible radio on site. EAS radios should be as common as smoke detectors in homes and businesses throughout San Juan County.

Below is some useful information about EAS and the necessary equipment:

San Juan County's Designated SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) Code: **053055**

There are a wide range of EAS radios on the market. The Department of Emergency Management uses the portable Oregon Scientific model. They found it for sale for \$30, and are happy with the results. If you're willing to spend a bit more, Reecom makes a model with some useful features that are hard to find elsewhere.

Build a Kit

After a major disaster the usual services we take for granted, such as running water, refrigeration and telephones, may be unavailable.

Your basic emergency kit should include:

- Water – one gallon per person per day
- Food – ready to eat or requiring minimal water
- Manual can opener
- First Aid kit and instructions
- Essential medications
- Flashlight
- Radio – battery operated
- Batteries for flashlight and radio
- Cash in small denominations and change for pay phones (It is likely that pay phone service will be restored before other phone service.)
- A copy of important documents such as insurance papers, identification cards, & phone numbers
- Unscented liquid household bleach for water purification
- Personal hygiene items including toilet paper, feminine supplies, toothbrush, toothpaste and soap
- Sturdy shoes
- Heavy gloves
- Warm clothes, a hat and rain gear
- Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items
- Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Extra keys to your house and vehicle
- Large plastic bags for waste and sanitation
- Any special-need items for children and seniors or people with disabilities. Don't forget water and supplies for your pets.
- Pocket knife
- Dust mask
- Paper, pens and tape for leaving messages
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Whistle
- Metal Mirror
- Waterless Hand Sanitizer

You should make an emergency bag for each member of your household and keep such a bag in your home and your vehicle.

Household/Family

Talk with your family about the potential disasters that can happen and why it's necessary to prepare for them. Involve each member of your family in the planning process. By showing them simple steps that can increase their safety you can help reduce their anxiety about emergencies. Make sure everyone knows where to find your emergency supply kit.

Have a flashlight and a pair of shoes under everyone's bed in case there is an earthquake during the night. Use a plastic bag tied to the leg of the bed to keep these items from moving during an earthquake.

Plan where to meet after a disaster if your home becomes unsafe. Choose two places, one just outside your home and one outside of the Highlands in case you are told to evacuate.

Determine the best escape routes from your home. Try to identify two escape routes.

Make sure each family member knows who your off-island contact is and instruct each person to call this person and tell him/her where they are.

Locate the propane gas shut-off valve and other utilities and make sure family members know when and how to turn them off.

Practice your evacuation routes, Duck, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll drills.

Teach each member of your family how to use a fire extinguisher.

Create emergency response cards for each of your family members and include a recent photograph of each family member to assist the authorities in reuniting family members in case they become separated.

Take into account the special needs of children, seniors or people with disabilities, family members that don't speak English and pets.

Home Safety

During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. However you can take simple steps to make your home safer. Start by viewing each room with a "disaster eye" and identify potential hazards – bookshelves that could tip over in an earthquake and block exits, heavy objects that could fall and cause injury, or reactive chemicals, such as bleach & ammonia, stored together under a kitchen sink.

Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and change batteries every six months.

Move beds away from windows.

Move mirrors and heavy pictures away from couches or places where people sit.

Clear hallways and exits for easy evacuation.

Store heavy items on the lowest shelves.

Keep ABC-type fire extinguishers and know how and when to use them.

Strap down your water heater and fit it with a flexible gas supply line.

Store flammable or highly reactive chemicals securely and separate from each other.

Secure pictures, wall hangings and heavy items such as bookcases and file cabinets.

Know how and when to switch off your utilities.

Children

Plan:

Include your children in family discussions and planning for emergency safety.

Teach your children their basic personal information so they can identify themselves and get help if they become separated from a parent or guardian. Prepare an emergency card with information for your child, including his/her full name, address, phone number, parent's work number and out-of-state contact.

Teach children to dial their home telephone number and Emergency 911.

Know the policies of the school or daycare center your children attend. Make plans to have someone pick them up if you are unable to get to them.

Make sure each child knows the family's alternate meeting sites if you are separated in a disaster and cannot return to your home.

Make sure each child knows how to reach your family's off-island and out-of-state contact person.

Teach children what propane gas smells like and advise them to tell an adult if they smell propane gas after an emergency.

Kit:

Include a family picture and a favorite toy, game or book for each child in his/her emergency bag.

Include your child's emergency card and include information on reunification locations and out-of-area contact.

Provide comfort food and treats for each child in your family disaster supplies kit.

Keep a recent photo of your children in your emergency bag.

Response:

Role-play with children to help them remain calm in emergencies and to practice basic emergency responses such as evacuation routes, Duck, Cover & Hold and Stop, Drop & Roll.

Role-play with children as to what they should do if a parent is suddenly sick or injured.

Role-play with children on what to say when calling Emergency 911.

Seniors & Disabled

Plan:

Tell your neighbors if you cannot move well or quickly in an emergency and make arrangements for someone to check on you. Develop a personal support network of people who will check on you following a disaster.

Your personal attendant or home health agency worker may have problems related to the disaster and may not be able to help you. Talk with your personal attendant about his/her agency's plan for continued client services in an emergency.

Try to always maintain a one-week supply of your prescription medication. If you use oxygen, keep an emergency supply for one week or more.

For all medical equipment requiring electrical power, such as breathing equipment and infusion pumps, check with your medical supply company about a backup power source. This could include a battery pack or generator.

Kit:

Include necessary medications, basic toiletries, any special sanitary aids, and important phone numbers as part of your emergency bag.

Keep extra mobility aids on hand. In an emergency you may be able to substitute a car battery for a wheelchair battery. Otherwise, have a manual wheelchair, canes, crutches and walkers as backups for use in an emergency.

Keep a whistle nearby in case you need to signal for help.

Response:

If you are in a wheelchair during an earthquake, stay in it and go into a doorway that doesn't have a door. Lock your wheelchair brakes. Cover your head and neck with your hands.

If you are in a bed or out of a wheelchair, stay put and cover your head.

Pets

Plan:

Arrange for a neighbor to check on your pets and take care of them if a disaster occurs while you are not at home.

If you must evacuate your home in a disaster, keep in mind that most disaster shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety regulations. Service animals for people with disabilities are an exception.

Ask friends or relatives outside the affected area to shelter your animals if necessary.

Ask the local animal shelter if they provide emergency shelter or foster care for pets in a disaster.

Kit:

Sturdy leashes and/or carriers to transport pets and ensure that your animals can't escape.

Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.

Food, potable water, bowls, cat litter and pan, plastic bags and can opener

Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, immunization records and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets

Pet toys

Response:

Bring all pets into the house so that you won't have to search for them if you have to leave in a hurry.

Do not try and hold onto your pet during the shaking of an earthquake or explosion. Animals instinctively protect themselves and hide where they are safe.

Animals react differently under stress. Outside your home and in the car, keep dogs securely leashed. Transport cats in carriers. The most trustworthy pets may panic, hide, and try to escape or even bite or scratch.

When you return home, give your pets time to settle back into their routines. Consult your veterinarian if any behavioral problems persist.

Utilities

The ability to locate and operate utility shutoffs will increase safety and reduce property damage in a disaster situation.

Propane

Propane leaks can cause an explosive and flammable atmosphere inside a building.

The main shutoff valve is usually located on the exterior of your home or building.

If you smell propane, shut off the main valve and open all windows and doors.

Only turn off the propane if you smell a leak.

Never use candles or matches. Do not turn on electrical switches or appliances.

To turn propane off, turn the lever 1/4 turn; when lever crosses the direction of the pipe (across the flow) the propane is off.

Keep a crescent wrench or gas shut-off tool nearby to turn the lever.

Once you turn off the propane it may take several days before it is safe to be turned back on.

NEVER ATTEMPT TO TURN THE PROPANE BACK ON. LET AN EXPERT DO IT.

Electricity

Electricity can be deadly. Electrocution can result from direct contact with live wires or anything that has been energized by these wires.

Know where your home's main electric switch is. It may be a pull handle or very large circuit breakers inside the panel box.

Shut off electricity when:

Arcing or burning occurs in electrical devices

You smell the distinct odor of burning insulation

The area around switches or plugs is blackened and/or hot to the touch

The complete loss of power is accompanied by the smell of burning material

Water

Water not only creates property damage, but it can also cause electrocution if electrical wires energize it.

An inside water shutoff is usually located in the basement, garage, or alley. The inside water shutoff is located on a riser pipe and is usually a red or yellow wheel.

In either case, to shut off the water, turn wheel clockwise until off.

Shut off the water when there is a severe leak inside the building.

Food

When a disaster occurs, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store enough emergency food to provide for your family for at least seven days.

Food Tips:

Avoid foods that require a lot of water, refrigeration or cooking.

Choose foods your family will eat and prepare only the quantity your family will readily consume; storage of cooked foods may be a problem.

Don't forget a manual can opener and utensils.

Recommended Foods Include:

Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables

Canned juices, milk and soup

High-energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars and trail mix
Comfort foods, such as hard candy, sweetened cereals, candy bars and cookies
Dried foods (Select carefully as some have a high salt content.)
Instant meals that don't require cooking or water

Water

Orcas Highlands relies on Rosario Utilities for its needs. In a disaster, water supplies may be cut off or contaminated due to a blockage or broken underground pipes. It may be several days before the problem is identified and water service is restored. Store enough water for everyone in your family to last for at least seven days. More is better.

Store a gallon of water per person per day.

Seal water containers tightly in a clean food-grade plastic container, label them with a date, and store in a cool, dark place.

Replace water supplies every six months.

Keep a small bottle of unscented liquid bleach to purify water.

If you have concerns about your water safety do one of the following:

Boil water for at least five minutes, let cool, then drink or use to prepare food.

Add 8 drops of unscented liquid bleach to each gallon of water. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal.

If you run out of stored drinking water, strain & treat water from your water heater. To strain, pour it through a clean cloth or layers of paper towels. Treat, following the directions above.

First Aid

In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep the following basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

Two pairs of disposable gloves

Sterile dressings to stop bleeding

Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect

Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection

Burn ointment

Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes

Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant

Scissors

Over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin or other pain reliever, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication

Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine, or asthma inhaler

Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose-monitoring equipment or blood pressure monitors

Phone

Plan for how you will communicate with loved ones after a disaster.

Long-distance phone lines often work before local phone lines, so identify an off-Island contact and provide this person with the contact information of people you want to keep informed of your situation. Share this information with your family and friends locally.

Avoid making non-urgent phone calls after a disaster – even if phone lines are undamaged, increased phone traffic can jam phone circuits.

Don't count on your cell phone - increased traffic on cell phone networks can quickly overload wireless capacity.

Keep coins in your emergency bag. Payphones are more likely to work before other phone lines. Cordless phones or phone systems require electricity, so make sure you have a backup phone that requires no electricity.

After an earthquake, check all your telephones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook and are tying up a line.

What to Do if?

Earthquake

Know what to do when the shaking begins: **DROP, COVER, & HOLD ON!**

DROP to the floor.

Take cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or next to an interior wall. **COVER** your head and neck with your arms. Stay away from windows.

HOLD ON to a sturdy piece of furniture and be prepared to move with it.

Stay where you are until the shaking stops and you're sure it's safe to exit – use caution when exiting buildings.

If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground.

If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as described above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.

After the shaking stops check yourself and others for injuries. Give first aid for serious injuries.

If at home, turn off the propane only if you smell gas.

Listen to the radio for instructions. Expect aftershocks.

Check your phones to be sure they have not shaken off the hook and are tying up a line.

Inspect your home for damage.

Storm / Flooding

Winter rains can cause floods, landslides, uprooted trees, and downed or broken utility lines.

During the Storm:

If water has entered a garage or basement, do not walk through it – it may contain hazardous materials.

Do not try to drive over a flooded road. If your car stalls, abandon it immediately. Attempting to move a stalled vehicle in flood conditions can be fatal.

Tune to the local emergency radio frequency or local TV channels for emergency advisories and instructions.

If you are asked to leave your property, disconnect all electrical appliances.

Evacuate

If you are told to evacuate by local officials, leave immediately:

Wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing.

Take your emergency bag.

Follow instructions of public safety officials and use authorized travel routes.

Lock your home, if possible.

If you have time, leave a note prominently displayed on the outside of your front door telling others when you left and where you are going. This will aid rescuers who will then know that you are not trapped in the building.

Once you are safe, call your out-of-state contact and tell them where you are.

Plan Ahead

Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places--a friend's home on another part of the island, a hotel, or a shelter.

Keep the telephone numbers of these places handy.

Consider the need to take any important prescription medications and medical supplies, as well as important documents, with you.

Power Outage

Power cuts can be due to accidents, extreme weather conditions, or accompany other disasters such as earthquakes.

If there is no power:

Turn off all appliances, computers, and lights – except one that will indicate when power has been restored.

Keep the refrigerator closed; this will help to keep food cold longer.

Be very careful of fire hazards caused by candles and other flammable light sources. Never leave an open flame unattended.

When power is restored, check all appliances.

Fire

If your smoke detector goes off in your home or if there is a fire:

Remain calm and get out. Do not try to fight the fire.

Call 9-1-1 from a safe place.

If your clothes catch on fire, **STOP** where you are, **DROP** to the ground, and **ROLL** over and over to smother the flames.

Drop to the floor to avoid smoke and fumes - crawl to safety.

Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is hot, find another way out.

If you are unable to get out of your home for any reason, stay near a window and close to the floor. If possible, signal for help.

Tsunami

A strong earthquake lasting 20 seconds or more in the Pacific Ocean region could generate a tsunami. A noticeable rapid rise or fall in coastal waters is a sign that a tsunami is approaching. Tsunamis most frequently come onshore as a rapidly rising turbulent surge of water choked with debris.

In response to a tsunami move inland or move to higher ground immediately.

Do not go to watch the waves.

Stay away from waterfront areas until local authorities have told you that it is safe to be there.