After the flood
Steps to Safety

1 Returning Home

Electrical Safety
• Beware of potential damage to utilities (gas and electric) from water.
• Wet or flooded fixtures and wires present a risk of electrical shock or fire.
• Do not use electricity until your power company has said it is safe to do so.
• Call a licensed contractor to work on utilities, appliances and any structural damage.

Generator Safety
• Never use a generator indoors or in enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces or basements.
• Operate generators away from doors and windows so that carbon monoxide does not enter the home.
• Provide 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides and above the generator for adequate ventilation.
• Allow generators to cool completely before refueling; fuel can ignite when spilled on hot engine parts.

Drinking Water Safety
• Do not drink water from your well or water system until it has been tested and you know it is safe. Until then, use bottled, boiled, or treated water for drinking, cooking, cleaning or bathing.
• Boiling water kills most harmful bacteria and parasites.
• To disinfect water for drinking:
  - Bring water to a rolling boil for one minute to kill most organisms.
  - As an alternative, you can disinfect water using household bleach. Do not use bleach that contains perfume, dyes, or other additives. Use 1/8-teaspoon per 1 gallon of water, mix thoroughly, and then let stand for 30 minutes before using. If the water is cloudy, use ¼-teaspoon per 1 gallon of water.
• Containers for storing water should be rinsed with a bleach solution before re-using them. Use water storage tanks and other types of containers with caution. Water storage tanks, as well as previously used cans or bottles, may be contaminated with germs or chemicals.
• Disinfect your well (see page 4).

Safety Checklist
- Wait for flood waters to recede
- Report downed power lines
- Report gas leaks
- Check for structural damage
- Turn off electricity
- Turn off gas or fuel

Phone Numbers*
Puget Sound Energy: 1-888-225-5773
Drinking Water: 867-2673
Septic Systems: 867-2673
Food Safety: 867-2667
Immunizations: 867-2524
Hazardous Waste: 867-2664
Dept of Ecology: 407-6000

Call 911 in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation
*local area code is 360

Disinfecting Water
For Drinking: 1/8 teaspoon unscented bleach to 1 gallon water
- or -
Bring water to a rolling boil. Boil for 1 minute.
For Cleaning: 1 cup bleach to 5 gallons water
2 Cleaning-up

Dry out your home and check for mold/mildew.
- Open outside doors and windows.
- Open closet doors and cabinets.
- Circulate the air with fans.
- Run a dehumidifier.
- Turn on the heat in your home when you know it's safe to use electricity and run your furnace.

Remove water-soaked items
- Carpets, furniture, and other absorbent items such as wall coverings, area rugs, drywall and insulation can’t be disinfected and should be thrown away.
- Sort items to be repaired, thrown away, or disinfected.

Gather cleaning supplies
- You’ll need mops, buckets, clean rags or sponges, water-proof gloves, cleaning products, and disinfectants.
- Use a shovel for clearing mud.

Clean & disinfect one room at a time
- Wear water-proof gloves and shoes, and a dust mask
- Use two buckets for cleaning; one for cleaning solution, and the other for rinsing. Rinse mops, sponges, or cloths frequently, wringing them out before re-wetting them in the cleaning solution.
- Change rinse water frequently.
- After cleaning a room, surface or item, disinfect it to kill the germs and odor left by the floodwaters.
- Disinfect surfaces that come in contact with food such as counter tops, pantry shelves, refrigerators, etc.
- Carefully clean and disinfect children’s play areas and toys.
- Wash all linens, clothing, and drapes in hot water, or dry clean them. If you have a septic system, use a laundromat for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your septic system has been professionally inspected.

After the cleanup
- Wash your hands with soap and bottled, boiled (allow the water to cool), or disinfected water.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you become ill.

3 Disease Prevention

- There is risk of disease from eating or drinking anything contaminated with flood water; don’t eat or drink anything contaminated with flood water and avoid bare skin contact with anything contaminated by flood water.
- Practice good hygiene; use soap and bottled, boiled or disinfected water when washing your hands. Wash your
hands thoroughly after handling articles contaminated with flood water or sewage.

- Keep cuts or sores out of contact with flood water; wash them well with soap to control infection. If infection (redness, swelling, or drainage) develops, seek medical attention.
- If you get a deep wound and it has been five years or more since your last shot, you may also need a tetanus booster. For minor wounds and as good health practice, teens and adults should have a tetanus booster every 10 years.

**Water-borne illness**

- Do not allow children to play in flood water areas.
- Wash children’s hands frequently (especially before meals).

**Disinfect your well**

- If your water is cloudy, let water run for 10-15 minutes before disinfecting.
- Chlorinate the well using household bleach (chlorine concentration of about 6%). Do not use concentrated or scented bleach. See table (right) for amount of bleach to use.
- Mix bleach in a bucket of water. Remove well cap, plug, or vent; using a funnel, pour the bleach into your well.
- Attach a hose to the nearest outside faucet and allow the water to run onto the ground for 1-2 minutes until you smell chlorine. Place the hose in the hole where you poured the bleach; allow the water to run back into the well for 15-20 minutes.
- Remove the hose and replace the well cap, plug, or vent.
- Chlorinate the lines; turn on each tap attached to the well (kitchen, bathroom, outdoor spigot, etc.), starting with the nearest tap to the well, and let the water run until you smell bleach, turn off and then go to the next tap.
- Turn off electricity to the pump and let sit overnight.
- Flush the chlorinated water out of the system; choose any outdoor spigot and let the water run onto the ground, away from your septic system (keep water flow from going into creeks, streams, or where fish or vegetation can be harmed), until you no longer smell bleach.
- Turn on each indoor faucet until you no longer smell bleach.
- Once the system has been flushed, the water can be used for laundry and bathing; wait to use it for drinking, brushing teeth, making ice or preparing food until it has been sampled and deemed safe.
- Wait 3-4 days after flushing the bleach out to collect coliform bacteria samples.

### Disinfecting a 6” Cased Well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Volume (Ft³)</th>
<th>Amount of Bleach (Cups)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Add 2 cups of bleach if water volume is not known

### Beware of Hazardous Products

- Flood waters have the potential of carrying chemicals you may encounter during flood recovery.
- Flood waters and mud may have moved or buried containers of cleaners, solvents, or chemicals. The containers may be damaged or leak. Be careful working with or around them.
- Take damaged containers of hazardous products to HazoHouse (see back).
- If you find a large propane tank or 55 gallon drum of a hazardous substance, do not attempt to move them yourself. Damaged propane tanks present fire or explosion danger; contact your local fire department of the Dept of Ecology immediately.
Food Safety

Foods to Discard
- Any food that has been contaminated by flood water should be thrown away.
- Food in containers with screw caps, snap-lids, crimped caps (soda pop bottles), twist caps, flip tops, and home canned foods cannot be disinfected and should be discarded if they have been exposed to flood water.
- Any frozen or refrigerated perishable foods like meat, dairy products, fish and poultry that have been at room temperature for two hours or more.
- Any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.

Foods that can be kept
- Undamaged, commercially canned foods can be saved. Remove labels from cans. Wash and disinfect cans with a solution of one (1) cup of bleach to five (5) gallons of warm water. Re-label the cans, including expiration date, with a new label or permanent marker.

Precautions to take
- Breast feed infants or use only pre-prepared, canned baby formula (not condensed, dried or requiring added water). If your water supply is safe then you can prepare formula the usual way.
- Your refrigerator will keep foods cool for about 4 hours without power; add block or dry ice to your refrigerator if you think the electricity will be off for more than 4 hours.
- Use bottled, boiled or disinfected water for food preparation.
- Prepare food on or in cleaned and disinfected surfaces or containers.

Protecting your Septic System

Limit water usage if your septic tank or drainfield are flooded or under water or the power is out.
- Take laundry to a laundromat.
- Standing water over the drainfield may be contaminated by sewage; avoid contact.
- The septic system can be used normally once the flood waters recede if sewage is not surfacing or there is no damage to the system.

For septic systems with pumps or electronic controls
- Turn off the pump at the control panel.
- When power is restored, switch the pump on and let it run for no more than five minutes; turn it off. Repeat this cycle every six hours until the pump turns off automatically.

Take Hazardous Waste to HazoHouse

What to take:
- Oil-based paints & stains
- Pesticides
- Fertilizers
- Fuels
- Motor oil (used or unused)
- Unused cleaners, solvents & other chemicals
- Propane tanks 5-gallons or smaller

What not to take:
- Empty containers
- Medical wastes
- Explosives
- Radioactive wastes
- Compressed air cylinders except 5-gallons or smaller

Hours:
Daily
8 am to 4:45 pm
Located at the Thurston County Waste & Recovery Center on Hogum Bay Road (exit 111 off I-5).

ph: 867-2912
Report Your Storm and Flood Damage

If you sustained flooding or storm-related damage between January 20th and now, please report your damages as soon as possible in one of these two ways:

- Complete the online form at [www.thurstoncountywa.gov/em](http://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/em)
- Call 360-867-2800 on Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The information you provide will be compiled into a countywide damage report and forwarded to the Washington State Emergency Management Division in an effort to qualify for federal aid.

If and when federal aid becomes available, you will be instructed on how to proceed with registering for disaster assistance.

Shelter Information

The American Red Cross is operating a shelter for those who are unable to stay in their homes.

**The shelter is located at 6015 30th Avenue in Lacey.**

The shelter is pet friendly and accessible for individuals with disabilities. Pets coming to the shelter must be crated and pet owners are encouraged to bring supplies such as food and water to care for them.

Additional Information

Additional information will be shared through the county’s social media channels as it becomes available. Residents are encouraged to follow Thurston County Emergency Management social media channels for regular updates:

- Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ThurstonEM/](https://www.facebook.com/ThurstonEM/)
- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ThurstonEM](https://twitter.com/ThurstonEM)
What You Should Know About

Hiring a Contractor, Remodeler, or Handyman

Are you planning to hire someone to work on your home or property? You need to Hire Smart.

We don’t usually think about financial risks when planning a home repair or remodeling project. Yet each year, L&I hears from hundreds of homeowners who’ve hired someone claiming to be a “contractor.”

The vast majority of Washington contractors are honest, skilled, and focused on satisfying their customers. But they also would agree that consumers need to be careful. The financial consequence of a bad or abandoned job can be devastating for any homeowner.

What can you do to protect yourself?
Make sure you hire a registered contractor.

Contractors ARE required to be registered in Washington if they are:
- Doing any work that “adds to or subtracts from real estate.”
- Providing advice or consultation on a construction project.
- Developing residential property or “flipping” houses.

Contractors ARE NOT required to be registered if they are providing services such as:
- Gutter cleaning.
- Pruning or lawn care.
- Window washing.

What is a registered contractor?

A registered contractor must maintain a surety bond, have liability insurance, and have a Washington business license. All information is available online: www.Lni.wa.gov/Contractors.

Washington state does not require contractors to pass a competency or skills test to become registered (though L&I does test and license electricians and plumbers.) Still, it is not legal for anyone to perform work, advertise, or submit bids without being a registered contractor.
How do bond and insurance requirements in Washington contractor laws help protect homeowners?

- **They give you financial recourse:** Required bonds give homeowners some financial recourse if the job is left unfinished or you are not satisfied with it. In these cases, you may take civil action in Superior Court against a contractor's bond. General contractors must post a $12,000 bond, and specialty contractors, such as painters or landscapers, a $6,000 bond.

- **They can cover damage:** The contractor's required general liability insurance coverage of $50,000 covers damage to your property; the $200,000 public liability insurance covers other personal damages.

- **They provide a ‘known’ business to work with:** A required current Washington business license ensures the contractor is not a ‘fly by night’ company and — if the contractor has employees — they are covered by workers' compensation insurance, obtained through L&L.

**Note: You may ask to see your contractor's liability insurance policy**

This will help you verify what it covers. Many liability insurance policies for contractors include ‘construction defect’ clauses and/or ‘exclusions for work outside of the contractor's normal business practices’. Reviewing your contractor's policy with your own insurance agent may be advisable, especially for larger projects.

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**Check out [www.ProtectMyHome.net](http://www.ProtectMyHome.net)**

It's L&L's online toolbox for homeowners looking for the right contractor, where you can:

- Verify a contractor's Washington registration.
- Find out how long they've been registered and if they have workers' compensation insurance for any employees they may have on your property.
- Check for any pending or past legal actions against the contractor and their bonding company, other business names used in the past, and any past infractions.
- Download a copy of our Hire Smart Worksheet.
- Get step-by-step advice on how to hire a contractor.
If you hire a person who is *not* a registered contractor, be aware and manage the risks.

If you *do* decide to hire someone who is *not* a registered contractor, you *could* be considered that person’s employer, with wage, tax, workers’ comp, safety, and record-keeping requirements.

**To protect yourself from risk and liability — if you are *not* working with a registered contractor — be sure to:**

- **Get workers’ compensation insurance through L&I:** If your worker gets hurt, it will pay medical expenses and protect you from being sued. (See Page 4.)
- **Pay at least the minimum wage:** Find the current required hourly wage at [www.Lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights).
- **Keep track of hours worked:** You must pay overtime after 40 hours in a given week. Also, if the worker later claims you failed to pay wages correctly, you will have a record.

**Heads up! Don’t pay twice.**

Did you know that you, the property owner, are ultimately responsible for ensuring suppliers, subcontractors and workers are paid? If your contractor doesn’t pay them, they have the right to file a lien on your property to obtain payment.

Learn more in Publication F625-017-000, *Facts About Construction Liens.*

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**Protect yourself with permits**

Your contractor should obtain all the necessary permits. If you do the work yourself, you would need to check which permits are required and obtain them if necessary.

- **Building permits:** Contact your local county or city building department.
- **Manufactured homes permits:** L&I must approve plans and inspect both new and ‘altered’ manufactured/factory-assembled homes and recreational vehicles for safety. Call your local L&I office or go to [www.Lni.wa.gov/FAS](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/FAS).
- **Elevator permits:** For any stair-lifter, pool lifting device or other conveyance. For information, call L&I’s Elevator Program: 360-902-6130.

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**Be wary of contractors who:**

- Provide credentials or references that can’t be verified.
- Offer a special price only if you “sign today” or use other high-pressure sales techniques.
- Accept only cash, require large deposits or the entire cost upfront.
- Ask you to pay in their name, rather than the name of a business.
- Do not provide a written contract or complete bid.
- Ask you to pick up the building permit, usually a contractor requirement. (Permits are for your protection; they help ensure you’ll meet building codes.)
- Offer exceptionally long warranties.
- Want to do most or all the work on weekends and after-hours.
- Give you an offer that sounds “too good to be true.”
If you do choose to open a workers’ comp account, here’s how:

If you are hiring people for new construction, remodeling work, or a property addition, and choose to have L&I workers’ comp insurance for protection, here are the steps:

- Go to www.BizGuide.wa.gov and fill out a Master Business Application. Or visit any L&I or WA Dept. of Revenue Business Licensing Office to get an application in person. (Find a Revenue office: www.bl.s.dor.wa.gov or call 1-800-451-7985.)
- Make sure you check the box that asks if you are hiring workers.
- The application will be routed to L&I and an account manager will contact you to set up the workers’ comp account. The entire process usually takes two weeks. Workers’ comp premiums for construction workers vary (from under $2 per hour to $6 per hour or more for jobs with a higher risk of injury). The coverage provides full medical benefits for the worker if injured on your job.

**IMPORTANT:** Most homeowner policies do not cover workers, so if you decide to hire someone who is not a registered contractor, check with your insurance agent. If you don’t have workers’ comp coverage, you could be legally liable for a worker’s injury costs and would be unprotected from lawsuits.

Call L&I’s Employer Services program for more information: 360-902-4817.

### L&I has offices throughout Washington ready to help you

- **Aberdeen:** 360-533-8200
- **Bellevue:** 425-990-1400
- **Bellingham:** 360-647-7300
- **E. Wenatchee:** 509-886-6500
- **Everett:** 425-290-1300
- **Kelso:** 360-575-6900
- **Kennewick:** 509-735-0100
- **Moses Lake:** 509-764-6900
- **Mt. Vernon:** 360-416-3000
- **Pullman:** 509-334-5296
- **Sequim:** 360-417-2700
- **Silverdale:** 360-308-2800
- **Spokane:** 509-324-2600
- **Tacoma:** 253-596-3800
- **Tukwila:** 206-835-1000
- **Tumwater:** 360-902-5799
- **Vancouver:** 360-896-2300
- **Yakima:** 509-454-3700

### More resources

- **Office of the Attorney General, Washington State**
  
  For consumer information or to file a complaint:
  
  Online: www.atg.wa.gov/safeguarding-consumers
  
  Phone: 1-800-551-4636

- **Better Business Bureau**
  
  To check out a business or file a complaint:
  
  Online: www.bbb.org
  
  Phone: 206-431-2222 (western Washington)
  
  509-455-4200 (eastern Washington)

### Contractor information at L&I

- [www.ProtectMyHome.net](http://www.ProtectMyHome.net)
- [www.Lni.wa.gov/HiringAContractor](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/HiringAContractor)
- Call toll-free: 1-800-647-0982

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Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.

PUBLICATION F625-084-000 (02-2018)
Get Help – Give Help
Dial 2-1-1

BASIC NEEDS
* rental & utility assistance
* food pantries
* temporary shelter
* transportation

HEALTH CARE
* health clinics & screening services
* counseling & addiction services
* dental clinics & assistance
* specialized treatment

FAMILY RESOURCES
* individual & family support groups
* volunteer opportunities
* child care & children's services
* holiday assistance

SPECIALIZED NEEDS
* disability support and advocacy
* legal
* employment

LANGUAGE SERVICES
* trained bilingual I&R specialists,
  * TTY and Interpreter services for
  140+ languages

United Way

TEXT
zipcode to 898-211

DIAL
211

SEARCH
WIN211.org

Washington State 2-1-1 Call Center Service Areas

For more information go to www.win211.org, or dial 2-1-1
Consigue Ayuda – Dar Ayuda
Marca 2-1-1

NECESIDADES BÁSICAS
- ayuda de alquiler y para uso general
- despensas del alimento
- albergue temporal
- transporte

CUIDADO MÉDICO
- servicios clínicos y exámenes de salud
- servicios de acooperamiento y consejería de adicción
- clínicas dentales y asistencia
- tratamiento especializado

RECURSOS DE FAMILIA
- grupos de ayuda individuales y de familia
- oportunidades para ser voluntario
- cuidado de niños y servicios para niños
- ayuda durante las festividades: acción de gracias y navidad

NECESIDADES ESPECIALIZADAS
- ayuda y apoyo para desacapacitados
- legal
- empleo

MENSAJE DE TEXTO
Mande código postal a 898211

MARCAR
211

BUSCAR
211info.org

United Way

Washington State 2-1-1 Call Center Service Areas

Para más información ir al www.win211.org, o marca 2-1-1
Public Opt-in Alerts

Citizens can request to receive certain types of notifications based on where they live or what types of information they are interested in. Currently subscribers can opt-in to river notifications as well as local alerts from public safety agencies warning of life threatening events and emergencies.

Opt in to receive alerts at www.co.thurston.wa.us/em/alerts

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

The Emergency Alert System is a national public warning system that utilizes radio and television broadcasting to deliver important emergency information such as AMBER alerts or weather information targeted to specific areas. Alerts begin with loud beeps followed by specific information about the emergency.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

WEA are text alerts that can be received on most smart phones and are relevant to your current location, not your home or address associated with your phone. WEA messages are very short and typically alert for extreme weather, area hazards, AMBER Alerts or Presidential alerts of national emergency.

NOAA Weather Radio

Receive up-to-the-minute advisories from the National Weather Service on your weather radio.

Configure your NOAA weather radio:
Frequency: 162.475 MHz
Channel 4
Thurston County SAME Code: 053067
Protect The Ones You Love

Smart911 is a free, new service available in your community to help you when you call 9-1-1. Once you've signed up, first responders will be aware of important information you have provided that will help them address your emergency. This information – including medical issues, current location and even pets - can help Police, Fire and EMS locate and help you.

- A free service – Provided by your community
- Private and secure – You control your information
- Saves time in an emergency – When seconds count

Smart911.com™
Because every second counts. Sign up today.