

Grays Harbor County Emergency Management

Preparedness on the Harbor

Volume 4, Issue 3

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Lake Quinault—Provided by Coral Lyons

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MOMENTS OF MISFORTUNE

Part 3

By Chuck Wallace
Edited by Lisa Ballou

This is Part 3 of a 6 part story appearing in the Grays Harbor County Preparedness on the Harbor Newsletter through the November/December 2018 edition.

PARTS 1 - 3 CAN BE FOUND AT:

<http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/Emergency%20Management/Story/Moments%20of%20Misfortune%20Part%201.pdf>

The pandemonium is unrelenting. Glass shatters. Objects fall with a crash, creak, bang and thud echoing throughout the darkness, painting mental pictures in my mind of the destruction of our house by the [earthquake](#). Falling debris is pummeling my head, back and legs as I struggle to crawl to the dining room table. I feel like I'm being beaten and punched as my nostrils fill with the smell of brick dust and sheetrock. My eyes burn and I choke on the dust, as I maneuver through the darkness and debris. Finally, reaching the center post of the dining room table next to my wife, I feel relief from the protection afforded by the tabletop.

The sounds of my wife choking and crying, and Katie's muffled screams sift through the thunderous noise of the event. I am helpless to assist either of them as Mother Nature thrashes each of us and our home.

I muster everything I have to comfort my wife, "I'm here Shar. It'll be over soon."

I only hear the sound of her coughing, sobbing and crying. Abruptly, the entire house jolts to the left. Shar and Katie both yelp and cry out. Then, unexpectedly, the house shifts to the right, heaving upward, throwing me forward, head first, into the center post of our dining room table. My head makes impact with the center post, exactly where the light fixture hit me on the left side of my head earlier today.

Cursing and seeing stars, I attempt to place my hand over my head, still [holding](#) the table center post with my other hand. The house jolts once more, much stronger than before. I'm propelled forward into the center post again, this time smashing the fingers on the hand covering my head. Everything is creaking, cracking and falling down around us, creating noises that terrify me. The darkness makes the entire ordeal more frightening than any event I have ever experienced. Will the house collapse over us? Will my family be alright? How much longer will this continue?

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The Eruption of Mount St. Helens 1980

Mount St. Helens in [Washington](#) erupts, causing a massive avalanche and killing 57 people on this day in 1980. Ash from the volcanic eruption fell as far away as [Minnesota](#).

Seismic activity at Mount St. Helens, which is 96 miles south of Seattle, began on March 16. A 4.2-magnitude tremor was recorded four days later and then, on March 23-24, there were 174 different recorded tremors. The first eruption occurred on March 27, when a 250-foot wide vent opened up on top of the mountain. Ash was blasted 10,000 feet in the air, some of which came down nearly 300 miles away in Spokane. The ash caused static electricity and lightning bolts.



Authorities issued a hazard watch for a 50-mile radius around the mountain. The National Guard set up road blocks to prevent access to the area, but these were easily avoided by using the region's unguarded logging roads. Many residents of the area evacuated, but a substantial number refused. [Harry Truman](#), 84—no relation to the former president—was one resident who refused to move and, after receiving a great deal of positive media coverage for his decision, became a national icon as well as, later, the subject of a local memorial.

Throughout April, scientists watched a bulge on the north side of Mount St. Helens grow larger and larger. Finally, on May 18 at 8:32 a.m., a sudden 5.1-magnitude earthquake and eruption rocked the mountain. The north side of the peak rippled and blasted out ash at 650 miles per hour. A cloud of ash, rocks, gas and glacial ice roared down the side of the mountain at 100 mph. Fourteen miles of the Toutle River were buried up to 150 feet deep in the debris. Magma, at 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit, flowed for miles.

The 24-megaton blast demolished a 230-square-mile area around the mountain. Geologist Dave Johnson was the closest to the eruption when it blew. He was on his radio that morning and was only able to say, Vancouver, Vancouver, this is it! before his truck was pushed over a ridge and he was killed.



Millions of trees were scorched and burned by the hot air alone. When the glacier atop the mountain melted, a massive mudslide wiped out homes and dammed up rivers throughout the area. The plume of ash belched out for nine hours; easterly winds carried it across the state and as far away as Minneapolis, Minnesota. The falling ash clogged carburetors and thousands of motorists were stranded. Fifty-seven people died overall from suffocation, burns and other assorted injuries. Twenty-seven bodies, including that of the stubborn Harry Truman, were never found. Mount St. Helens went from 9,600 feet high to only 8,300 feet high in a matter of seconds.

[Courtesy of history.com](#)

Minute by Minute: The Eruption of Mount St. Helens A&E [Documentary](#)

Mount St. Helens [Visitor Center](#)



The Mount St. Helens Visitor Center opened its doors to the public a few years after the monumental eruption of Mount St. Helens. Functioning as a gateway to the mountain, over 30 miles away, our goal is to educate visitors on the historical significance of the landscape before and during the eruption. We also focus on the resulting impact on nearby ecosystems. Our vantage point offers a view of the Western slope of the mountain, visible from both our center and walking trail.



Join us April 28 through May 13 on a *Sound the Alarm* home visit in your community, where teams of volunteers will be installing 100,000 free smoke alarms in more than 100 cities across the U.S.

Together, we can save lives!

Participating Fire Departments

- Aberdeen FD
- GHFD #2
- McCleary FD
- Montesano FD
- South Beach RFA

What Shelter-in-Place Means:



One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow the instructions provided in this [Fact Sheet](#).



Sanitation After a Disaster

Sometimes public health gets poo-pooed when we talk about preparedness. Here are some things to think about.

Following a major disaster, you might be out of water, or unable to flush your toilets for weeks. If human waste is not properly dis-posed of, it can create epidemics of Cholera, Typhoid, Giardia, or Hepatitis, to name a few. Below are some suggestions to help you deal with sanitation challenges following a disaster:

- Know how to turn off the water to your home so no contaminated water can enter.
- Store clean water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan to keep one gallon per person, per day. Prepare to survive for at least two weeks. That means a minimum of 14 gallons of water per person should be stored.
- Gather supplies for a makeshift toilet. This can include things like five gallon buckets, garbage bags, and even plastic toilet seats. There are many ideas available online, as well as the option to purchase pre-made camp-type toilets.
- Make a plan for waste disposal. Scout potential sites for waste burial. These sites should be at least 50 feet away from any well, spring, or water supply. Waste pits should be at least 2-3 feet deep.
- If you can't bury, keep a large, leak-proof, closeable container available to store waste until it can be properly disposed of.

Grays Harbor CERT success with a reaching a long time goal

Grays Harbor CERT Program Manager, Heather Worley has had a goal for a very long time to bring Teen CERT to our county. That has now happened.

Welcome to our newest (and youngest) CERT Team in the county. Ms. Worley is proud to announce that on March 25th 2018 our county had a new graduating class of CERT members. **Aberdeen High School** is the first school to launch Teen CERT in our county. We had 30 students



from the school attend the three day course with 5 other citizens from the community. They were very excited to learn and take part in the drill on the last



day of class. The students expressed interest in continuing with the CERT program even after they are out of high school. Once a teen reaches the age of 18 they are eligible to become a member in their local city team with the adults.

The teens learned safety, fire suppression, disaster first aid, light search and rescue among other topics. Our county CERT program has doubled in member numbers this year and interest is growing in both our communities as well as our schools. Since the Aberdeen High School class we have had two other schools express interest as well. To learn more about what CERT is and how you can help please visit our website at:

graysharborcert.com.



Article and Photos by Tammy Fairley, OS CERT

Celebrate Pet Safety this Memorial Day



As the unofficial start to summer,



Memorial Day is a great excuse to get outdoors. But whether you're partying, barbequing, or just soaking up some rays, it's important to keep your pet's safety in mind at all times. To prevent any Memorial Day mishaps, we've put together some tips to help protect animals during the "Dog Days" of the season.

Click [HERE](#) for tips from ASPCA.



Save the Date

Emergency Preparedness EXPO !

October 6th
10:00am - 3:00pm

Rotary Log Pavilion
1401 Sargent Blvd
Aberdeen



Outdoor [Burning Rules](#) For Unincorporated Grays Harbor County



1854

Residential Burning and
Land Clearing Burning

Department of
Public Services

[Fire
Marshal](#)

(360) 249-4222

*For Burning Regulations
inside city limits contact
your local Fire Department*

Shar is sobbing and praying out loud for everything to stop. Katie is still calling out for me, screaming as another loud noise resonates around the room.

I yell out, "I'm here Katie. It's alright. Just stay where you are. I'll be there soon."

As we all remain under cover, I begin to worry about if my other daughter Janie is safe at her friend's house. Then, just as suddenly as the [earthquake](#) began, it stops. Home and car alarms are blaring throughout the neighborhood. Debris is slowly and randomly falling around us, and I can hear the flow of water leaking from the second floor and possibly from the kitchen. Shar and I begin to crawl out from under the table. It's so very dark. I can't see anything.

I ask, "Are you alright?"

Shar, still crying, answers, "I don't know...I think so... Get Katie!"

I say, "Just stay here for a minute. Don't move around until I can find some lights."

Moving toward Katie, I yell, "I'm coming Katie. Hold on, baby. Daddy's coming."

Reaching into my back pocket, I pull out my cell phone and turn on the light. The white light pierces the blackness of the room. I'm amazed at the debris and the luminescent curtain of floating dust particles I see throughout our home, as I move toward the couch where Katie is crying. I step over fallen, broken sheetrock, and weave my way around items from our shelves and cabinets that have overturned and emptied their contents all over the living room. Once at the couch, I begin pushing pieces of sheetrock off its back, and clear an area where I can flip the couch over to check on Katie. Lifting the couch, I peek under to see her balled up tighter than seems possible. I roll the couch away. She doesn't move.

"Katie? Are you alright? Are you hurt?"

Slowly opening her eyes, squinting at my cell phone light, she whimpers "No, I'm alright, but... I'm really scared."

"We'll be ok," I respond without much confidence, and add. "Do you have shoes on?"

"No, I took my slippers off to lay on the couch" she replies.

I begin looking around the couch with the light from my cellphone and find one slipper, handing it to her. I flip and toss some of the debris around, but can't find the second slipper.

"Shar," I shout out, "do you have shoes on?"

She responds, "I have my sneakers on."

I ask, "Are the boots you wore clam digging last week in the downstairs closet?"

She replies, "Yes, I just put them away."

I tell Katie, "Stay here, I'm going to look for a pair of shoes or boots you can wear to get out of here. Do you have your phone with you?"

She pulls it out and shines the light. I tell her to shine it on her mother until I get back with her shoes.

I call out, "Shar, stay where you are until I get Katie some shoes. I'm going to try to get to the closet. We'll work our way outside together, when I get back."

Working my way through the debris and broken items on the floor, I can see our front door is jammed open at an angle. I can't see anything outside, just darkness. I get to the closet door. It's partly open but won't budge far enough to get inside easily. I look inside and see the boots. Kneeling down and reaching in as far as I can, I'm able to grab one, then use the other to drag the far boot closer to me. I pick them up and maneuver over, across, and around everything that fell during the quake.

I reach Katie and hand her the boots to put on. "Dad, these boots don't fit. They're too big."

I reply, "Just wear them. There is too much broken glass, nails and who knows what laying around here to cut your feet on."

After Katie adjusts the boots on her feet, we work our way to Shar, and using the lights from our cell phones, we trek through the debris, through the partially open front door, to the outside. It's a bit chilly outside, but it has stopped raining. We walk to my wife's car, which is parked in front of our house. Luckily, I carry her car keys on my key ring. I pull them from my pocket, open the door and pop the trunk to get out two blankets for them to drape over themselves, along with a large LED flashlight so we can see better.

Katie says, "Where's our [Go Kit](#)?" Looking directly at me she asks, "Don't we have a Go Kit?" She turns to her mother, "What about water?"

Shar immediately replies, "Ask your father why we don't have any."

I look over at my wife, sigh heavily, and give her the exasperated, I get it look. I'm guilty of not [preparing our family](#) for disaster. I admit to Katie, "We don't have a Go Kit."

Katie cuts me off, "Dad, we're supposed to have a Go Kit. We learned about [disaster preparedness](#) in school and that we're supposed to have a Go Kit."

Shar chimes in, "Your father didn't go to school that day, honey. He had something better to do on that particular day ... and every day after."

I try to ease the situation. "We don't have anything else in the trunk we can use. Let's make the best of what we have. In the morning, I'll go back in the house and get what we need."

Katie exclaims, "What if I need to go to the bathroom? Do I have to go back into the house?"

I ask, "Do you need to go now?"

Katie responds, "No."

Then Shar asks, "Is anyone going to ask me?"

I ask, "Do you need to go?"

She says, "No, but I might soon."

I say, "Well, try to hold it until I figure out what to do."

That was enough to set Shar off on a diatribe about my disaster [preparedness](#) neglect, "This is not good Jack. I don't like this at all. We aren't ready for this. We have no food, no water, and no bathroom. I told you time and time again about this...."

I say, "Please, Shar, I get it. But we can only do what we can now. . please try to relax..."

"Don't tell me to relax," she yells back. And although I can't see her eyes in the darkness, I can tell they are glaring at me.

I ask, "Please, can we just work to make things better for all of us?"

Luckily, Katie jumps in, "The phones aren't working, other than the light. We can't text either."

I tell Katie to turn her cell phone light off to save it in case we need the cell phone lights later. I turn to see if I can light up the front of the house with the LED flashlight. There is a large crack from the mid-roof level running down next to the front door. All of our windows are broken and I notice the curtains blowing around in what's left of our window frames.

I hear Shar gasp and begin to cry again, "Oh my god! My house. Oh god. It's broken. Oh, what are we gonna do?"

Suddenly, a large commotion comes from inside of the house and our [dog](#) Kailani, comes bounding through the doorway. I call her over and attempt to put her in the car with my wife and daughter.

Katie excitedly says, "Kailani, you're safe! Mom, she's safe! Good girl. Come here puppy. Get in the car...that's right. Good girl."

Kailani looks more relieved than we do that the earthquake is over. She lays over Katie's lap in the back seat of the car.

As I hand the car keys to Shar, she holds onto my hand and asks, "Do you think Janie is safe?"

I answer as I squeeze her hand, "She's smart. She knows what to do. I'm sure she's safe."

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Looking around, I don't see or hear anyone else outside and tell Shar, "I'm going to walk up the street to see if anyone needs help."

Be careful Jack. Don't get hurt."

I respond, "I will. You know I'm always careful."

She adds, "Like I said, be careful."

Unexpectedly, the ground begins to shake again. I kneel down and Shar ducks and covers her head as Katie pulls Kailani tight and holds on for dear life in the back seat of the car.

Shar yells out, "Not again...oh goddd!"

It only lasts a few seconds, maybe eight to ten. It was nowhere near the size of the earthquake we just survived. As the [aftershock](#) stops rumbling, I hear more debris falling from my home and from nearby homes.

I get up, look to see if my wife and daughter are alright, asking, "Are you ok?"

"Yes, We're ok, Jack."

I respond, "We'll probably have these for a while. If this was a coastal earthquake, it probably generated a [tsunami](#). I hope everyone understands what to do."

Shar looks at me in panic, as does Katie, "We're safe, right?"

I say, "Yeah. We're safe. We're nowhere near the [inundation](#) zone. We just need to stay safe while walking around in the debris and stay safe during the aftershocks. They can be pretty big."

"I'll be back soon," I declare, as I begin walking up the street using the flashlight to light my way.

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As I'm walking up the street, I see two or three lights in the distance. I hear a few voices from far away, calling out asking if people are safe. I stop at my neighbor's home, knock hard with the flashlight and try to open the front door. It's locked. I yell into the broken front window and listen – nothing but water running and the faint message coming from an [All Hazard Alert Weather Radio](#) that must be buried beneath the debris in their living room.

Moving from home to home, I encounter a few neighbors, all with damage to their homes, but none were injured by the earthquakes. Some have Go Kits, most do not. Some don't even have flashlights. Many have candles and have moved a few chairs to their front lawns. Nobody feels safe in their homes, especially since we can't truly see the damage incurred.

Every once in a while, a small group of three or four people walk up the street passing our homes. I chat with a few, who tell me they are moving toward [Sam Benn Park](#), because someone told them the assembly area for tsunami was situated there. I told them I hadn't heard that information, but that didn't mean it isn't true and disclose the park is about two blocks away. They said the damage from the earthquake on our street was similar where

hey lived, about four blocks down the street toward the river. I asked if anyone was hurt, but all they knew was someone broke an arm running from his house during the earthquake. Most injuries they heard about were minor.

Meeting up with Bill, a neighbor from up the corner, I notice the sky beginning to lighten, signaling daybreak approaching. Suddenly I realize I've been walking around for hours. I talk Bill into joining me to check on our other neighbors. Methodically moving from home to home, we arrive at a home on the other side of our street where Pearl and Joe live, an elderly couple with a small poodle. I go up to the house, and the door is closed, but unlocked.

"Hello?" I knock, open the door and call out into the living room.

I see lots of debris and then see Pearl sitting on the floor holding her dog.

I move to her, and ask, "Are you ok Pearl?"

I notice a small cut on her forehead as she looks to me. She is mumbling to herself.

I ask, "Where's Joe? Where's Joe, Pearl?"

She continues to mumble and points to a large china cabinet laying on the floor. I shine the light to it and notice two legs, most likely Joe's, sticking out from underneath.

I gasp, "Oh Jeez."

I move to the cabinet quickly and attempt to lift it up. I barely get it up to my knees when Bill appears out of nowhere and helps push the cabinet upright. Joe's hands are shaking but he isn't talking. I lean down to get a better look and Bill said not to move him. He might have a broken neck or back. I hand Bill the flashlight and run out using the cell phone light, to get one of the blankets from our car.

I return and say, "We can't leave them in this place. Things could still fall and Pearl is having some issues. Let's get them outside."

Bill asks, "What about Joe?"

I respond, "I don't know yet. I just know they can't stay in here. Maybe we can put them in their car." I search Joe's pockets and exclaim, "I got em," as I pull his car keys out! "One of us can stay with them until we get some help."

We move some of the debris surrounding Joe, so we can roll him up in the blanket, hoping to stabilize him as best we can. Bill and I move Joe's arms ever so slowly to his sides as we wrap him up *papoose style*.

I ask Bill, "Do you want me to move Pearl to the car? I'll put her in the front seat and then we can get Joe into the back seat."

Bill responds, "I can get her, you stay with Joe."

I hand him the flashlight, and he talks to Pearl, slowly helping her from the home to their car at the curb. Pearl refuses to let go of her poodle. Just as Bill begins to close the door to the car, the ground begins shaking again. I look to see the cabinet next to Joe begin falling. Moving quickly I step under it and try to keep it from falling on Joe. The ground motion and the heavy, bulkiness of the cabinet causes it, as well as me to fall. It positioned itself over my lower body as I lay atop of Joe, on my back, perpendicular to his lower body with the cabinet on me, but not touching him. Struggling to move, Joe groans. I realize I'm having trouble moving myself. The tremblor

stopped quickly.

I yell out, "Bill.... Bill? Hey Bill, are you there?"

There is no answer. I struggle to move from under the cabinet again. Joe groans louder but doesn't say anything. I don't think I can get out from under here without someone helping.

Afraid I may hurt Joe more than he already is, I try to yell out louder, "Hey Bill? Bill?"

I lay there for fifteen or twenty minutes attempting four or five times to get from under the cabinet, but can't without hurting Joe.

I yell out, "Bill? BILL? Are you there?"

Jeez, where did he go? He couldn't have just left me here.

Suddenly a larger rumble begins and large pieces of ceiling tiles and sheet rock fall directly upon Joe and I. A large piece crashes into my head, and I see stars. More debris tumbles and falls over us as I'm hit with something very solid and hard, a brick. I attempt to cover my face as bricks thud down upon us. Abruptly, I am smashed with hundreds of pounds of bricks. Oh god, the chimney has fallen through his roof.

After what seems like an eternity, the earthquake stops. I cannot move at all. I can't see anything other than a small bit of light from what I believe may be the sun coming up.

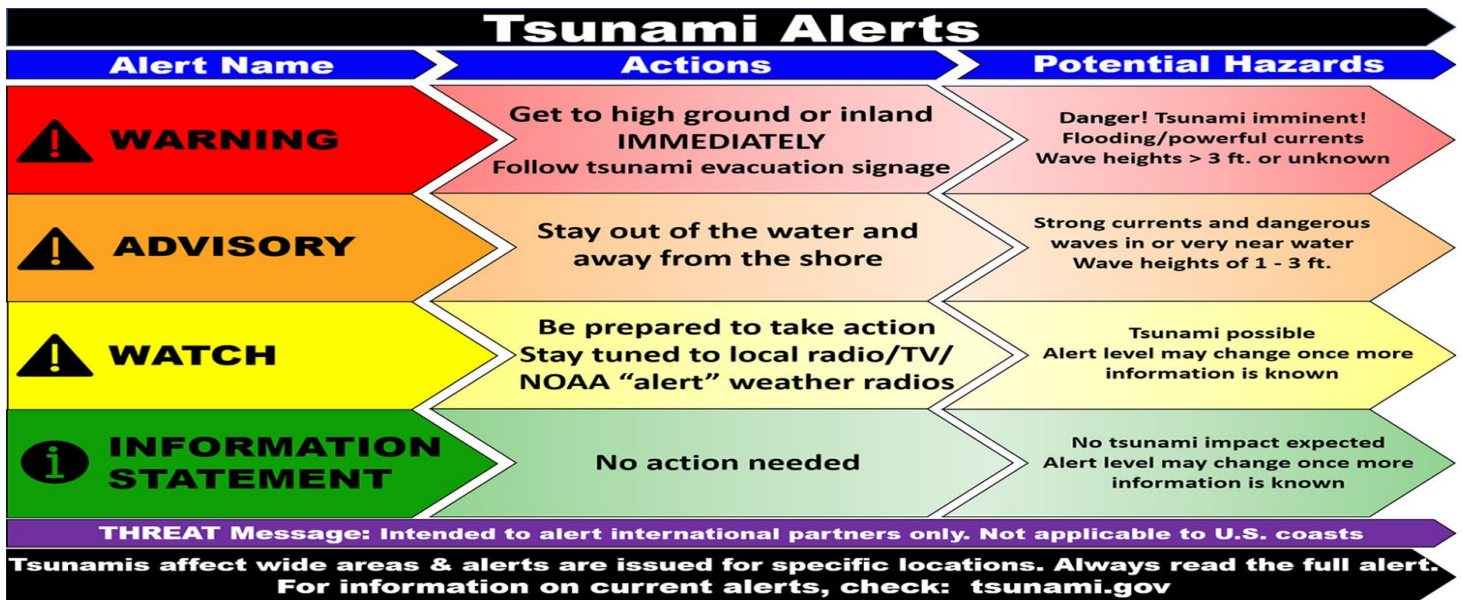
I can barely breathe. I try to yell for help, but not much noise is produced as I yell out, "Help...help..." I'm choking but can't cough.

I am having trouble breathing. We're being crushed under the bricks.

I try once more to call for help, "Help ... Bill?"

I couldn't even hear myself call out. I think I'm going to suffocate. I close my eyes, listening to my heartbeat get softer, and slower as I can barely draw a small breath. I see my family on my closed eyelids. I should had said I love you more often. I listen to myself breathing, shallow, panting, and slowing. Breathe..... breathe..... brea..the..... brea....t.....h.....e..

End of Part 3



Contacts & Info



Tell us what you think!!

Please take a few moments to let us know what you like or would like to see in the "Preparedness on the Harbor" newsletter
Please submit your comments to:
cmccullough@co.grays-harbor.wa.us



Lake Quinalt—Provided by Coral Lyons

All Hazards Alert Broadcast (AHAB) Siren testing occurs the first Monday of every month at noon.

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Article & Photo Credit

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Moments of Misfortune
by Chuck Wallace

Sanitation After Disaster
Courtesy of Pacific County
Emergency Management

Grays Harbor CERT Success Story and photos by Tammy Fairley

ATTEND the Grays Harbor Citizen Corp meetings the second Wednesday of every month at 9am, in the Grays Harbor County Forestry Building,
310 W Spruce St Montesano, WA 98563

Meet with other county agencies and organizations working on disaster preparedness in our county. Check out their Facebook page too.
www.facebook.com/GraysHarborCitizenCorps

SIGN UP for the Grays Harbor Emergency Notification System to receive Emergency & Disaster information on winter storms, earthquakes, flooding, from Grays Harbor
http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/DEMNotificationRequest.php

LIKE the Grays Harbor Emergency Management Facebook page at
www.facebook.com/pages/Grays-Harbor-County-Emergency-Management

FOLLOW Grays Harbor Emergency Management [@GHCDEM](https://twitter.com/GHCDEM) on Twitter

VISIT the Grays Harbor Emergency Management website at
http://cms5.revize.com/revize/graysharborcounty/departments/emergency_management/index.php

Upcoming Events

May 6th - 8th

CERT
Community Emergency Response Team Training
Montesano City Hall

May 19th & 20th

ICS-300 / ICS-400
GHFD #8 - Pacific Beach

May & June Radio Shows

Listen for Tammy Fairley of the Ocean Shores CERT Team at 9am on: 91.3FM or at <http://kosradio.com>

May 24th
June 28th

or 8:40 am on KXRO 101.7FM / 1320AM

May 22nd
June 26th



Upcoming Meetings

Citizen Corps
May 9th - 6:00pm
June 13th - 9:00am
LEPC
May 9th - 10:15am
June 13th - 10:15am