



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS **Get Ready Guide** **2026-2027**

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Emergency Preparedness Get Ready Guide 2026-2027

Preparation is vital to ensuring the safety of our families, neighbors, and community in times of uncertainty. This annual emergency preparedness guide provides information about planning for natural disasters, power outages, wildfires, and more. Helping you plan and stay prepared for any unexpected situation. Have an emergency plan for your family and loved ones. Planning can make all the difference tomorrow—let's get prepared today together!

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Resilient communities prepare together

ERIN MCMAHON

*Lincoln County Leader
Guest Column*

Disasters and emergencies can happen anywhere, and without warning. In Oregon, we deal with wildfires, floods, heat domes, ice and snowstorms—along with the ever-present threat of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. It's important for everyone to know what to do, and how to care for one another.

This is why FEMA and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) observe National Preparedness Month in September and the Great ShakeOut in October. We want to empower community members to prepare together.

As director of OEM, helping people in Oregon get ready for disasters is a top priority. I'm excited to share the Be 2 Weeks Ready tool kit, which can be found online at Oregon.gov/oem/Be2WeeksReady. This digital toolkit is available in multiple languages and is designed to help individuals and communities build their emergency plans, practice their skills and share resources in meaningful ways.

Our goal is to foster a culture of preparedness within established community groups—faith organizations, neighborhood associations, local 4-H clubs, schools and workplaces. By working through the toolkit together, these groups can strengthen their collective

resilience and help ensure everyone is equipped to handle emergencies.

A great opportunity for community practice is the Great Oregon Camp-In, held the weekend after the Great ShakeOut on October 15. You can find out more about these events under "community preparedness" at Oregon.gov/OEM. The Camp-In gives households and neighborhoods a chance to spend some time working on their emergency plan and practicing what it might be like to do day-to-day activities after a large disaster disrupts our daily lives.

Being two weeks ready doesn't have to be expensive or happen all at once. Many actions you can take today cost little or nothing:

- Visit ORAlert.gov to sign up for local emergency alerts.
- Make sure Wireless Emergency Alerts are enabled on your mobile phone.
- Understand Oregon's evacuation levels (1-Ready, 2-Set, 3-Go) and know the routes in your area.
- Familiarize yourself with real-time road conditions by visiting TripCheck.com.
- Make go-bags with survival essentials for every member of your family, including pets.

Be Prepared If Cell Service Goes Down

Communication systems can fail during disasters. Create a PACE plan (Primary,



Erin McMahon

COURTESY PHOTO

Alternate, Contingency, Emergency) so your household knows how to communicate if cell service is disrupted.

Example PACE plan:

- Primary: Cell phones
- Alternate: Satellite-based service add-ons offered by some cell providers
- Contingency: Satellite communicator separate from your phone
- Emergency: Short-range communication radios and a hand-crank NOAA Weather Radio

Another critical part of preparedness is knowing how you will recover. Make sure your renter's or homeowner's insurance provides the coverage you need for hazards in your area. Standard policies may not include protection for events such as floods, landslides or fires. Recovery often depends on insurance, savings and loans, so talk

with your agent to ensure you have the right coverage. Also consider making copies of your vital documents—scan or photograph them and store them in a secure, password protected online drive or in a waterproof container inside your go-bag.

Finally, look to your local leaders for guidance. Connect with your local emergency management office, Community/ Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams (C/NERTs), sheriff's office or Tribal police, and follow them on social media to stay informed during rapidly changing emergencies.

In the end, what I most want for the people of Oregon is to feel empowered—not frightened—when thinking about how they will respond in an emergency. I believe the Be 2 Weeks Ready toolkit and connecting with local emergency preparedness groups will help individuals build strong community connections that lead to better outcomes for everyone when disaster strikes.

Erin McMahon was appointed director of the Oregon Department of Emergency Management in September 2023. She is a retired U.S. Army brigadier general, attorney and combat veteran with 24 years of experience advising state and national leaders on emergencies requiring operational and civilian support.



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Maintaining great indoor air quality at home during wildfires

Wildfire smoke can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles, impacting indoor air quality well beyond active fire zones. While you can't control the air outside, you can create a cleaner indoor environment by taking these steps:

1. Monitor your local Air Quality Index (AQI) and wildfire smoke forecasts before conditions worsen. Visit www.airnow.gov to get real-time local data.

2. Run a HEPA air purifier continuously in frequently used spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms.

3. Consider an air purifier with an air quality monitor that automatically adjusts as indoor air quality changes, such as the GermGuardian 22" Intelligent Tower Air Purifier (AC4880). Beyond smoke, it provides whole-room coverage, capturing 99.97% of dust, pollen and pet dander, while

an optional UV-C light reduces airborne allergens, germs, bacteria and mold spores. Its IntelliSense technology monitors air quality 60 times per minute and automatically adjusts fan speed, and its digital panel displays real-time air quality, so you always know your air is clean. Another choice designed with smart home enthusiasts in mind is the GermGuardian AirSafe+ XL Smart Air Purifier, which is equipped with four layers of protection including a HEPA PURE 360-degree filter, UV-C light, carbon filter, and washable fabric pre-filter, capturing 99.97% of dust, pollen, and pet dander. Also featuring IntelliSense technology, it automatically adjusts fan speed when poor air quality is detected to deliver continuous, round-the-clock purification. Plus, it syncs with the Aria for Home app, Alexa, and Google Home so

you can keep your air quality visible; monitor real-time AQI, set timers, and get filter replacement reminders, whether you're home or not.

4. Check whether your air purifier's filter needs replacing. GermGuardian recommends replacing the filter every 6-8 months depending on use. When purchasing a new filter, be cautious of inexpensive "compatible" filters sold online and seek out genuine replacement filters designed specifically for your unit. Doing so will help ensure proper fit and optimal filtration performance when it matters most.

With wildfires increasing in both frequency and intensity, having a way to protect the air you breathe at home is essential. Be sure that your home is equipped with top notch air purifiers, and that you properly replace their filters often.



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Crisis to Care Guide to help families navigate emergency department visits

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY

When a child or teen experiences a behavioral health crisis, parents are often forced to make life-changing decisions with little information and support. A behavioral health crisis is a critical, acute situation in which a person's thoughts, emotions, or behaviors become so overwhelming that they can no longer safely cope, and there may be risk of harm to themselves or others. Questions like: What happens next? What should I ask? Will my child be safe? These can

feel overwhelming during an emergency.

To help answer those questions, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Family Support Network (OFSN) have launched the Crisis to Care Guide, a free online resource to help parents and caregivers understand what to expect before, during, and after a behavioral health-related emergency department visit.

The website was developed by parents, caregivers, and youth, with input from healthcare professionals, behavioral health providers and community partners throughout Oregon. Rather



than simply explaining emergency room procedures, the guide is written through the voices of families who

have experienced these situations, offering practical advice, encouragement, and reassurance alongside clinical information.

"No parent expects to face a behavioral health crisis with their child," said Karin Holton, community engagement and development director for Oregon Family Support Network. "Families tell us they want to know what to expect, what questions to ask and how to best advocate for their child and family. The Crisis to Care Guide is an update to an earlier Oregon Health Authority guide with information, guidance, and resources and to remind families that they are not alone."

The guide contains practical information about:

- Recognizing when a behavioral health emergency may require emergency care.
- Preparing for an emergency department visit.
- What families can expect during evaluation and treatment.
- Communicating with providers and advocating for their child.
- Questions to ask before leaving the hospital.
- Creating a safety plan for returning home and connecting with ongoing supports.
- Caring for yourself while caring for your child.
- Oregon resources, peer support, and community services.

"Families are critical partners in supporting a child's behavioral health, especially during a crisis," Oregon Health Authority Behavioral

Health Director Ebony Clarke said. "The Crisis to Care Guide reflects Oregon's commitment to giving families clear information, practical resources, and compassionate support when they need it most. We're proud to partner with Oregon Family Support Network to make this updated guide available to families across the state."

The guide is also intended to support emergency departments, behavioral health providers, schools, pediatricians, mobile crisis teams, and community organizations. Hospitals and providers are encouraged to share the resource with families before discharge and whenever behavioral health support is needed.

In addition to the online resource, print versions are available by emailing admins@ofsn.net.

About Reach Out Oregon

Reach Out Oregon, a program of Oregon Family Support Network, connects families with trusted information, peer support and resources to help them navigate parenting challenges, behavioral health concerns, and life's unexpected moments. Through education, connection and lived experience, Reach Out Oregon helps ensure that no family has to navigate these challenges alone.

About OHA

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) works to improve the lifelong health and well-being of all people in Oregon by expanding access to quality health care, strengthening behavioral health services, advancing public health, and reducing health inequities.



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Ready Oregon Youth Art Contest for Preparedness Month

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) invites young artists across the state to participate in the Ready Oregon Youth Art Contest and show us what community preparedness means to them.

Oregon youth in grades K–12 are encouraged to create an original piece of art showing how people can work together to prepare for emergencies and disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, winter storms and more.

Need some inspiration? Learn how you, your family and your community can prepare for emergencies through Oregon's Be 2 Weeks Ready program.

Who Can Enter?

The contest is free and open to all youth in grades K–12 in Oregon.

Entries will be judged in four grade-level categories:

- Kindergarten–2nd grade
- 3rd–5th grade
- 6th–8th grade
- 9th–12th grade

Each category will recognize a First Place, Runner-Up and Honorable Mention.

Youth may submit one entry each.

Artwork Requirements

Artwork should creatively answer the question: What does community preparedness mean to you?

Whether preparedness

means neighbors helping neighbors, families building emergency kits, communities practicing evacuation plans or people looking out for one another during a disaster, we want to see preparedness through the eyes of Oregon's youth.

Submissions must meet the following requirements:

- Medium: Original two-dimensional artwork, including painting, drawing or mixed media.
- Size: Between 8" x 10" and 11" x 14".
- Format: Artwork must be created on a flat surface. Canvas, cardstock or poster board are recommended.
- Original work: Artwork must be 100% original and created solely by the student. AI-generated images and copyrighted characters are not permitted.

How to Enter

Each submission must include the following information:

- Artist's name
 - Grade level
 - Name of parent, guardian or other contact person
 - Contact person's relationship to the artist
 - Contact person's phone number
 - Contact person's email address
 - A short description of the artwork
- Artwork may be mailed to the Oregon Department of Emergency Management or dropped off at an approved local, county



or Tribal emergency management office.

Approved Artwork Drop-Off Locations

Ready Oregon Youth Art Contest entries may be dropped off at any of the approved locations below. Please review each location's hours and instructions before visiting.

Eastern Oregon
Malheur County
Emergency Management
151 B St. W.
Vale, OR 97918

Please address or deliver artwork to the Malheur County Emergency Manager.

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) – Public Safety Building
46400 Timine Way
Pendleton, OR 97801
Drop-off location: Public Safety Building lobby

Northwest Oregon
Grand Ronde Fire Station
28480 McPherson Drive
Grand Ronde, OR 97347
Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Willamina Fire Station
825 Main Street
Willamina, OR 97396
Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Please note: Emergency services staff may occasionally be away from the stations while responding to calls or

emergencies.

Lincoln County
Sheriff's Office – Support Services
225 W. Olive Street, Room 203
Newport, OR 97365

Hours: Monday–Thursday
8 a.m.–noon and 1–5 p.m.
Closed noon–1 p.m. and Fridays.

Drop-off instructions: Enter through the courthouse public entrance and proceed through security. Once

inside, go upstairs to the service window at Room 203 and provide the artwork to staff.

Willamette Valley
City of Eugene – The Atrium

99 W. 10th Avenue
Eugene, OR

Drop-off location:

Reception desk

Hours: Noon–4 p.m.

Please route artwork to: Althea Sullivan

North Central Oregon
Wheeler County
Sheriff's Office

701 Adams Street
Fossil, OR 97830

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Mailing Option

Artwork may also be mailed directly to:

Oregon Department of Emergency Management

3930 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

Please ensure mailed entries arrive by the contest deadline: 5 p.m. Friday, September 25, 2026.

Important Dates

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Friday, September 25, 2026.

Winners will be notified by Friday, October 2, 2026.

Get creative, get prepared and show us what a ready Oregon looks like to you!

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Coos County Emergency Management prepares to help others prepare

By Dean Brickey

Coos County Emergency Management, a department of the Coos County Sheriff's Office, has scheduled their community outreach program related to emergency preparedness for Sept. 26. The department's event is a pertinent example of how local organizations take critical emergency safety information to their communities in an engaging and effective manner.

Don "Chip" Delyria, Coos County emergency manager, said "Coos County

Prepares 2026" will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pony Village Mall, North Bend, featuring indoor and outdoor exhibits. It's part of the county's observance of National Emergency Preparedness Month. County officials began the September fair in 2021, taking over from the previous organizers, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

"We have been having it every September," Delyria said. "We meet with other emergency

Emergency

Continued on Page 9



A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter is expected to be among the static displays outside Pony Village Mall on Sept. 26.

Courtesy of Coos County Emergency Management



Courtesy of Coos County Emergency Management

A "211" operator will be available to answer questions about the telephone and online information service, which is similar to using finding information in the "Yellow Pages," when telephone directories were common.



Courtesy of Coos County Emergency Management

A representative of the South Coast Utility Coordinating Council will be available to answer questions about locating underground services when necessary.



Courtesy of Coos County Emergency Management

A first-responder's vehicle is part of a display inside Pony Village Mall at a previous Coos County Prepares event.

Emergency

Continued from Page 8

professionals, and that could be anything from "211" to the fire departments. It is more of a public outreach and education session. The Coast Guard usually brings a helicopter."

Among the fire departments Delyria expects to participate are Coos Bay, North Bend, Coquille, and Charleston. He also expects

representatives from the American Red Cross and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"211," he said, is a number to call for general information. "If you need to know something, you can dial '211,' and they have a pretty good repository of information."

Debbie Mueller, Coos County emergency coordinator, who works with Delyria in the Emergency Management office, said the operators at "211" can not only

answer questions about government, but offer community information.

"If you're needing to know where to take your pet — to a vet or to a groomer — you could call them," she said. "It kind of reminds me of the Yellow Pages."

Public servants planning displays include the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, which prepares tsunami maps, the Sheriff's Posse and CERT.

Delyria said the event has been attracting



Photo by Dean Brickey

Debbie Mueller and Don "Chip" Delyria of Coos County Emergency Management display the Cell on Wheels or "COW," which the county intends to exhibit at Coos County Prepares 2026. It's a mobile communications hub the county can deploy when other communications sources are disabled. It's on loan from the state

more people each year since the county began organizing it. Participants will be able to view emergency vehicles, such as ladder trucks and a helicopter.

Northwest Natural Gas is providing free hot dogs, which members of the Coos Bay-North Bend Lions Club will barbecue beginning about 11 a.m., Mueller said, adding that Mojo's, a restaurant in the mall, is offering canned beverages for \$1 each and Columbia Bank is providing ice cream.

Other businesses and government agencies will be on hand to demonstrate their services, such as Pacific Power, which is bringing backpacks that have preparedness materials in them. The backpacks will be among items raffled at 2:30 p.m., Mueller said, along with

10 preparedness-themed gift baskets.

The goal is to empower the county's 65,000 residents to be self-sufficient, because emergency responders may not be immediately available over the county's 1,600-square-mile area.

"We go from sea level to 4,300 feet," Mueller said. "We don't have a lot of emergency responders to get to everybody, to help everybody. And so we really are trying to empower people to take care of themselves, to be self-sufficient, and to know how to maybe help their neighbor."

Another educational aid available at the event will be the South Coast's "Are You Ready?" book, which the county developed in cooperation with Curry County.

Delyria and Mueller are busy this week preparing to help others prepare in advance of a variety of emergencies that can befall Coos County residents: wildfire, flooding and other weather-related damage, earthquakes and tsunamis, for example.

"It's a great event," Mueller said. "It really has grown. We've averaged between 350 and 400 people attending. And it seems to grow each year.

Important emergency information is only effective if the community has access to it. Events like "Coos County Prepares" is a great example of how local Emergency Management departments get that information to the folks they serve.

Oregon sees record wildfire season

Officials urge precautions

JEREMY C. RUARK

Lincoln County Leader

As of Aug. 3, Oregon has set a new wildfire record for total acres burned, at approximately 2 million acres, according to the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center (NWCC).

The NWCC is the Geographic Area Coordination Center for the Northwest Region which includes the States of Oregon and Washington.

The NWCC serves as the focal point for interagency resource coordination, logistics support, aviation support and predictive services for all state and federal agencies involved in wildland fire management and suppression in the region. Cooperating agencies include the: Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Oregon Dept of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington Dept. of Natural Resources and the National Park Service.

The majority of the wildfires have been in Central and Eastern Oregon. Several of the fires were sparked by lightning.

Due to Oregon's increasing drought and new heat waves forecasted for much of the state, the state's

public safety services, natural resource agencies, and tourism office are encouraging residents and visitors to practice wildfire prevention, prepare their home and a go-bag for evacuation, and know where to go for real-time alerts and information.

According to the NWCC's predictive services, each year the Pacific Northwest is at elevated risk of significant fires from now until October. With fire crews responding to new fire starts every day, Oregonians and our visitors need to be prepared for wildfires, help prevent future ones, and be aware of up-to-date conditions as they travel across the state.

How can people help prevent wildfires?

The Oregon Department of Forestry is urging the public to actively practice wildfire prevention as the state continues to put out new fires every day. Additional human-caused fires on the landscape will draw the firefighting efforts away from the lightning-caused fires and put extra strain on ground and aviation resources, which are already spread thin. YOU can help prevent wildfires by:

- Checking and following your local fire regulations. The majority of the state is either in high or extreme fire danger right now,



Courtesy photo

The 2026 summer wildfires have scorched approximately 2 million acres in Oregon.

meaning even the smallest of sparks could start the next large wildfire.

- Debris burning may be prohibited where you live.
 - o Check local restrictions or contact your local ODF office.
 - o Return to check on your burn site if you burned earlier in the year.
- Make sure your car has been recently serviced to avoid faulty parts throwing sparks.
- Don't drag tow chains.
- Avoid parking vehicles on tall, dry grass.
- Recreate responsibly. Where campfires are allowed, make sure your campfire is DEAD OUT before leaving it by drowning it with water, stirring it with a shovel and repeating that process until it is cold to

the touch. If there is heat coming off it, there are still embers that could reignite.

Take Simple Steps to Protect Your Home from Wildfire

The Oregon State Fire Marshal cautions Oregonians that summer is not the safest time to tackle large landscaping or defensible space projects. Hot, dry conditions increase the risk of starting a fire from using tools or equipment. There are small, safe steps you can take now to reduce wildfire risk around your home. The Oregon State Fire Marshal encourages everyone to plan ahead and do light cleanup tasks that protect your property without increasing fire danger.

Easy tasks to reduce risk in the first five feet around your home

- Clear leaves, pine needles, and other debris from your roof, gutters, and under decks.
- Trim plants and bushes that are touching your home or growing under roof eaves. Give trees and shrubs space from each other and from structures.
- Remove dead plants and wood mulch. Use nonflammable materials like rocks or gravel near your home. Avoid bark mulch or dry grasses right next to buildings.
- Move firewood, propane tanks, and other flammable items at least five feet away from your home.
- Cover attic vents, soffit vents, and spaces under decks with 1/8-inch metal

mesh to block embers.

Avoid using power tools or equipment that could spark a fire, especially during the heat of the day. Summer is a good time to plan defensible space projects, so you're ready to work safely once wildfire season ends.

For more tips or help with defensible space, visit www.oregondefensiblespace.org or <https://preventwildfires.oregon.gov>.

How can I prepare myself in case I need to evacuate?

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) urges everyone to prepare for wildfires and other emergencies by knowing evacuation levels, staying informed, having a plan, and having a go-kit ready.

Evacuation Levels

- Oregon follows a three-level evacuation notification system, each structured around safety threat level.
- Oregonians should become familiar with "Be Ready, Be Set, Go!" evaluation levels to make informed decisions when receiving evacuation notices.
- OEM urges people to evacuate whenever they feel unsafe, conditions can change rapidly; individuals should always make the best

Wildfire

Continued on Page 11

Wildfire

Continued from Page 10

decision for their safety.

- Following evacuation, people should not return to the area until public safety officials state it is safe.

Stay Informed

- Stay informed, sign up to receive evacuation at, ORAlert.gov remember to update information if need be.

- Find the website for your county emergency management, sheriff's office, or tribal police and follow them on social media.

- Check your photo settings to ensure wireless emergency alerts are turned on.

- Build redundancy into how you can access alerts. Have a personal C.E. Plan for what you will do if your cell phone stops working. A good place to start is a hand-cranked NOAA radio.

- If you use a third-party app for alerts and situational awareness and notice discrepancy information, default to the information provided by your local emergency management office.

Have a Plan

- Do you know what to do during an evacuation? See the evaluation checklist with this story at the Lincoln County Leader website that explains what to do before, during and after an evacuation.

- Establish a communication plan with a list of important contacts and a safe place for loved ones to meet if they are separated during an emergency.

- Identify multiple evacuation routes from home, work, or school and plan for transportation needs.

- People with disabilities should consider individual circumstances and specific needs when planning for evacuation, such as special equipment, transportation, and service animals. Then plan extra time, when possible, this may mean treating a

level 2 notice like a level 3 notice.

- Have an evacuation plan for pets, make a pet evacuation kit in a tote bag or pet crate, and plan for transportation and sheltering of large animals such as horses and other livestock.

Make a Go-Kit

- Assemble an emergency kit of essential supplies that can be grabbed quickly.

- Pack an easy-to-carry backpack or bag for each household member with health and safety items such as food, water, medication, flashlights, phone chargers, clothing, and important documents. Visit American red Cross to learn more.

- Find more information and resources at Wildfire.Oregon.gov.

Recreate Responsibly

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) encourages visitors to know before they go when it comes to campfire restrictions. OPRD coordinates with local fire officials throughout the summer and bans open flames in high-risk areas around the state until conditions improve. Please check park webpages or the current fire restrictions list before your next visit. Thank you for helping to reduce the risk of wildfires.

Additionally, many waterways in eastern Oregon are currently being used by firefighting aircraft. Stay clear of the center of major waterways. Recreational boats can block aircraft from accessing the water, which means they will not be able to retrieve water to help put out nearby wildfires.

Occasionally, OPRD will need to evacuate a state park. Evacuations occur at level 2 or earlier depending on fire conditions and the time required to get in and out of the park. Please follow park ranger instructions to pack gear and evacuate. Any park closure information will be posted on the park web page and OPRD social media.

How do I know if I should change my vacation plans?

Oregon is a large state, and while wildfires can disrupt travel in some regions, those impacts are often localized and can change rapidly as conditions improve or deteriorate. Because of this, it's important to check current alerts at the resources below to see whether

your destination is affected. If you're looking for general guidance about traveling during wildfire season, read travel Oregon's Wildfire Travel FAQ.

Before You Go

- Check road conditions at Tripcheck.com or by calling 511.
- Review and follow all local fire

restrictions and closures.

- Be aware of air quality conditions that could impact health and visibility.

- View real-time hazard updates, maps, and fire information through OEM's Wildfire Dashboard.

- Sign up for emergency alerts at ORAlert.gov and ensure Wireless Emergency Alerts are enabled on your mobile device.

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State agency issues well advisory

STAFF REPORT

Lincoln County Leader

Residents experiencing dry wells during this summer's drought – or anytime – are encouraged to report issues via the website owrd.info/drywell.

Dry well reports help the state track ongoing and emerging shifts in groundwater supplies, and impacts on people who rely on groundwater. Residents who provide reports contribute to a greater understanding of conditions specific to their area.

The Oregon Water Resources Department

maintains the state's Dry Well website, including an interactive map where reports can be tracked by county and basin, along with highlighting hotspots with higher numbers of reports.

The website also includes valuable information for well owners, such as maintenance tips, how to find licensed and qualified personnel to service their well, and links to potential financial assistance.

"As Oregon continues to face constrained water supplies, understanding groundwater trends across the state becomes even more important," said Ivan Gall, Director of the Oregon Water



Resources Department.

Dry well reporting is required as part of qualifying for financial assistance through OWRD's Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund (WARRF), except for wells

damaged by fire. WARRF provides grants to low- to moderate-income homeowners or members of a Federally recognized Tribe to help with the cost of repairing or abandoning and replacing a dry well or a well damaged by wildfire.

The well must no longer provide enough water for essential in-home uses like drinking, cooking or bathing, and the applicant must live at the property full-time. A majority of program funding is dedicated to applications from drought-declared counties or for wells impacted by wildfire. Find more information and apply at owrd.info/warrf.

With bipartisan support, the Oregon Legislature's Emergency Board recently allocated \$1 million in additional state dollars to WARRF to ensure families continue to have access to water in their homes.

About the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD): The Oregon Water Resources Department works to assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies are available to meet current and future needs. The agency administers laws governing management and distribution of Oregon's surface and groundwater resources.

For more information, visit oregon.gov/owrd.



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When the power goes out, will your phone still work?

Ice, wind, and a long outage are part of an Oregon winter. Four things worth doing before the first one hits:

1 Keep one corded phone

Cordless handsets need household power. A basic corded phone plugged into the wall jack keeps working when the lights don't.

2 Check your backup battery

Phone service that runs through in-home equipment rides on a backup battery. They wear out. Ask us how to test or replace yours.

3 Write the numbers down

Power company, doctor, family, RTI. Tape the list inside a cabinet door so it's there when a cell battery isn't.

4 Don't rely on one line

Cell sites run on generators that can run dry in a long storm. A home phone is a second way to reach help.

Why keep a home phone? It isn't competing for a cell signal, it doesn't run out of battery, and when you call 911 it sends your street address — not an approximate location.

Add home phone service before the first storm.

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Where coverage meets community

Mobile Crisis Team supports community, lightens load for hospitals, law enforcement

LINCOLN COUNTY

Lincoln County's mobile crisis team is fundamentally transforming how the community responds to mental health emergencies by bringing crisis intervention services directly to people in their communities rather than limiting response to emergency departments and jails.

The program represents a significant shift in crisis response philosophy in Oregon and locally in recent years, moving from a reactive, institution-based model to a proactive, community-centered approach that meets individuals where they are – mentally and physically.

The mobile crisis team operates 24/7 to provide immediate mental health support to anyone experiencing a crisis, regardless of whether they are enrolled in other county programs. The program is available to all community members and can be accessed through multiple pathways, including a 24-hour crisis line called Protocol, walk-ins at behavioral health offices, and referrals from law enforcement and health care providers.

When Shandi Hoey, a Mobile Crisis

Supervisor and Licensed Professional Counselor, joined Lincoln County in 2019 – and later stepped into her supervisor role in 2021 – she quickly recognized the need to restructure the county's crisis response model, drawing on her previous mobile crisis experience in Arizona.

"When I began my position as crisis supervisor in 2021, I started working on making the switch from crisis calls mainly happening in the emergency departments and jails to mobile crisis, taking calls out in the community and meeting people where they're at," Hoey said.

The timing of this transition aligned with a major statewide initiative.

About a year and a half ago, Oregon implemented Mobile Crisis Intervention Services (MCIS), which is a statewide program designed to provide urgent, community-based behavioral health crisis support to people experiencing a mental health emergency.

"This was probably the greatest thing that could have happened because it really brought forth the importance and need of an actual mobile crisis team," Hoey said.

Lincoln County's crisis team currently operates



Courtesy photo

A view inside of the Lincoln County Mobile crisis Team Van.

with four licensed crisis counselors working 12-hour shifts (3 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 3 a.m.) to ensure round-the-clock coverage, along with four case managers who work staggered shifts to support evening and night operations, though not for the full 24 hours.

Building and maintaining adequate staffing has not been without challenges.

Recruiting master's-level and licensed clinicians is difficult

in such a rural area, and these credentials are required for crisis counselor positions, according to Hoey. Despite this, she

said the county has successfully maintained full staffing, enabling a comprehensive crisis response.

"As a supervisor, I couldn't be prouder of our crisis team," Hoey said. "Every single member brings deep compassion and genuine care to the people they support. I see them show up wholeheartedly, day and night, for individuals who are going through some of the hardest moments of their lives. They consistently go above and beyond, offering comfort, stability, and hope when it's needed most. Their dedication to our community is truly inspiring, and I'm honored to work alongside such an exceptional group of people."

The team usually fields up to four to five calls per 12-hour shift, though the calls vary significantly day to day. Rarely, Hoey said, will they have

zero activations during a shift. During the final three months of 2025, the team was dispatched 222 times.

"Every activation involves a behavioral health crisis," Hoey explained. "We're not responding to everyday conflicts. We're called when someone is experiencing significant distress, such as suicidal ideation, severe mood instability, or symptoms related to untreated mental health conditions. These situations are rarely simple, and each requires careful and compassionate intervention."

How the Mobile Crisis Team Works

The mobile crisis response process begins with triage and assessment. When someone walks into a behavioral health office

Mobile Crisis

Continued on Page 14



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Mobile Crisis

Continued from Page 13

or contacts the crisis line – crisis line staff first attempts to provide support over the phone – if that individual in crisis requests mobile assistance, the team immediately gathers information and springs into action.

Hoey described the assessment process: “As soon as the individual in crisis lets staff know they would like to speak to a crisis counselor face to face, a staff member calls an interagency line. We answer, we triage the call – what’s the person’s name, date of birth, what’s going on with the individual, is

the environment safe – and then we head to their location.”

Once on scene, the crisis counselor prioritizes building rapport and creating a safe space for the individual to share what they’re experiencing.

“We introduce ourselves and then we take them somewhere private, to an office or room, and sit down with them. It’s really kind of a rapport building thing at first to get them in a comfortable place to be able to answer questions,” Hoey said, adding that the assessment itself is conducted conversationally rather than as a rigid checklist.

The team completes a crisis assessment that

has specific questions to cover – questions on suicidal thoughts, plans, intent, homicidal thoughts, substance use.

“But we don’t ever go in and ask the questions one by one,” Hoey said. “We sit with that person, build that rapport, and talk to them.”

This approach helps individuals feel heard and supported, rather than interrogated, she added.

The outcome of a crisis assessment depends on the individual’s situation and needs. For those struggling but not in immediate danger, the focus shifts to connecting them with services and providing continued support.

Hoey explained that if someone isn’t enrolled in services and is experiencing depression, but they don’t have suicidal thoughts, a plan, or intent, the next step is simply to ask whether they’re interested in services. If they are, staff focus on helping them get connected.

“We start looking at options for enrolling them in services and getting appointments scheduled,” Hoey said. “Anybody that has a crisis assessment is eligible for 72 hours of crisis follow-up. When they come in for that assessment and they’re done, there’s still 72 hours of us being able to call them just to check on them. The next day when we do that follow-up, we ask them

how they’re doing and if they’re interested in a phone call tomorrow.”

For individuals in acute crisis with active suicidal intent and means, the team facilitates inpatient placement.

“If we do have people who are severely depressed or we encounter somebody who says, ‘I don’t want to live, I am having thoughts, I have a plan to overdose, and yes I have medication at home,’ then we start talking about inpatient placement to stabilize and keep the individual safe,” Hoey said.

Community Benefits: Better Patient Experience, Reduced Health Care Costs, Reduced Law Enforcement Burden

The mobile crisis approach offers significant advantages over traditional emergency department-based crisis response, benefiting both individuals in crisis and the broader community.

According to Hoey, perhaps the most immediate benefit is the improved experience for individuals in crisis. Traditional emergency department responses can feel institutional and frightening.

“Before, if you’re struggling with any mental health symptoms or suicidal thoughts, you’ve got to walk into the ED, tell somebody, and they bring you back, ask you questions,

dress you in scrubs, ask you for your personal belongings, and then put you in a room that’s designed for safety and for most feels isolated. We’re told many times by people, ‘This didn’t feel good,’ or ‘I don’t like coming here,’” Hoey said.

In contrast, mobile crisis allows for assessments in comfortable, familiar environments, such as their home or a friend or family member’s home.

“When you can sit down with somebody in their own space, even our unhoused

population ... I have a gentleman that we would see who lives in a tent, but we know where he lives, and even being able to go over there and meet him in his environment is a more comfortable experience versus being in a hospital,” Hoey said.

Avoiding admission to the emergency room also reduces costs to the individual and reduces health care costs for the community at large. Mobile crisis teams also reduce the burden on law enforcement and at times can help prevent unnecessary arrests for mental health crises.

“Previously, when law enforcement responded to a behavioral health crisis, options were limited. If the situation escalated and officers were unable to stabilize the individual, the person could end up in jail—even when the underlying issue was related to their mental health,” Hoey explained.

The mobile crisis

model has transformed that dynamic, according to Hoey. Now, officers can call in crisis team staff who provide assessment, de-escalation, and support.

“This partnership helps ensure individuals receive appropriate care rather than entering the criminal justice system, leading to safer and more compassionate outcomes for everyone involved,” Hoey explained. “Now that we operate a mobile model, the collaboration with law enforcement works well. When officers request support, we respond to the scene and connect directly with the individual”

Typically, law enforcement arrives first to assess the situation and ensure the environment is safe.

“Once they determine its secure, we can step in and say, ‘We’ve got it from here.’ This allows officers to return to their responsibilities while we take the lead, which often helps the person in crisis feel more at ease,” Hoey said. “Most of these calls end with us offering options like, ‘Would you like to come with us to our office so we can talk?’ or meeting the person in their home and sitting with them to provide support.”

Those experiencing a mental health crisis in Lincoln County can call the crisis line 24 hours a day at 866-266-0288. At any time, the individual in crisis can request a face-to-face crisis assessment from a mobile crisis team member.



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Keep an ear to the ground for tsunami alerts

While some coastal Oregon towns have the advantage of elevation, others like Florence, Brookings Waldport, Seaside and Bandon have oceanside and riverside business and residential communities only a few feet above sea level. While earthquakes pose a threat to all coastal communities, the threat of tsunami adds and additional level of necessary preparation for some.

During the last tsunami roadshow in Florence, Johnathan Allan Ph.D. explained how tsunamis are formed and said geologists have developed tsunami modeling systems that, at the point of an offshore quake, predict the height and speed of a tsunami and then estimate its time of arrival on certain shoreline areas.

Those findings were also used to develop inundation maps of the Oregon Coast.

Go to oregontsunami.org to find printable maps. Post them in your home and if possible, practice walking the route to high ground regularly.

Allan said researchers have learned the best thing one can do during the quake is to drop, cover and hold on in a safe area, but once the shaking stops, one must get out of the inundation route.

"This event can be survived," he said. "We are fortunate because there is a lot of high ground close to, and in our communities. With some simple steps, we can survive."

Althea Rizzo, with the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, has been planning for tsunamis since 2007 when she was the tsunami coordinator for Lincoln City.

"The National Weather Service is our authority when it comes to alerting four tsunami," she said. "We get our warnings from the national tsunami warning center up in Alaska. There is also the Pacific tsunami warning Center in Hawaii, but we only listen to what Alaska is telling us."

Timelines

"An earthquake happens somewhere, and the US geological survey and the tsunami warning center get alerted," she said. "They all race to their monitors to see where this earthquake was. They have a little competition with each other, and Cal Tech, to see who can find the location, and find the magnitude, and usually, within about five minutes they have a pretty good idea of where that earthquake was. So, once they have that information, they decide if a tsunami as

possible, because not all earthquakes cause a tsunami."

She said any information statement will be sent out if there is no chance of tsunami, telling people they can return to low areas because no tsunami danger exists.

If there is a possible tsunami, they will issue a watch, a warning or an advisory," she said. "If it's a distant source, and it's big enough to cause a tsunami, what they will do is issue a watch. This is basically a notice that you should start to think about starting preparations, but they don't know if a tsunami has actually been generated yet. If it is from a local source, then they will issue that warning or advisory, but it really depends on the characteristics of the earthquake."

Rizzo explained that a warning will send alerts to NOAA radios, television stations, radio stations, cell phones and warning centers. That will be repeated on social media and some communities' tsunami sirens will be activated.

"If it's a local source, the earthquake is your warning," she said. "If you have your cell phone set up for Amber Alerts, you will get this alert."

Go to oregontsunami.org to find printable maps. Post them in your home and if possible, practice walking the route to high ground regularly.

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You deserve to feel secure, no matter what the day brings. That's why we believe in the power of preparation — with the goal of helping you face the unexpected with confidence, clarity, and hope. When moments of uncertainty arise, having a “go bag” ready for each member of your household ensures that your family is equipped to move forward together. Preparing for any kind of urgent event that may affect residents and visitors in Tillamook County can help you respond more quickly and safely when the unexpected happens. We are proud to be a partner on your journey, providing the inspiration and information you need to stay resilient.

Because we're not just here to help you navigate the unexpected. We're here to help you protect the life you've built.

3-Day Go Bag Essentials

- **Water:** One gallon per person per day
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- **Light and power:** Flashlight, extra batteries, and a portable charger
- **First aid and meds:** Essential bandages and a seven-day supply of medications
- **Documents:** Copies of IDs and insurance in a waterproof bag
- **Tools:** A whistle to signal for help and a multi-tool

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