



Office of Emergency Management
MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

501 SE Hawthorne, Suite 400
Portland, Oregon 97214
(503) 988- 6700

Dear Community Member,

This is a message from Multnomah County Emergency Management and you are receiving this letter because you live or have a home in the area affected by the Eagle Creek Fire. Although the fire risk has diminished, a new hazard, common after wildfires, has now emerged.

Landslides, and other ground movement events are more common after wildfires. This packet is meant to help you understand the increased risk and what you can do to prepare. Being able to recognize the signs of a landslide can help you to respond. A **Homeowner's Guide to Landslides** by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and Washington Geology Survey is included here. This guide will help you see the signs of a potential landslide, what contributes to a landslide, and what actions can be taken to reduce risk.

Fire events can damage soil to the degree that the ground is no longer able to absorb water. This can create flash floods. Flash floods can become debris flows. Both of these incidents can be life threatening. Debris flows can carry rocks and branches, or grow to scour drainages with boulders and trees. They can occur in burn areas after just a few minutes of hard rain, and have been documented as happening more than 12 hours after a rain event.

When the forecast indicates the possibility of a weather pattern that may create the conditions that make flash flooding probable, NOAA/NWS will issue a Flash Flood Watch. In the event that Flash Flooding is occurring or imminent, NOAA/NWS will issue a Flash Flood Warning. See *the back page*: "What to do during Flash Flood Watches and Warnings".

It is vitally important for you to get the most up-to- date information on what is happening. Please install the application (see link below) available for Apple, Android, and Blackberry mobile devices. This application can be downloaded onto your phone by visiting <https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>

Additionally, most phones made in the last five years set up to automatically receive Wireless Emergency Alerts, WEA. However, WEA only sends the most severe Warnings. They do not provide the advance notice that a Flash Flood Watch provides.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 503-988- 6700. If you are calling after hours or your call is urgent, choose Option 1 and you will be directed to our 24/7 Duty Officer. You can also contact us via e-mail at: em.dutyofficer@multco.us.

Thank You,

Multnomah County Office of Emergency Management

What to do during Flash Flood Watches and Warnings:

- NOAA/NWS recommends vigilance during Flash Flood Watches. Stay alert and awake. Many debris-flow deaths occur when people are sleeping.
- After receiving notification of a Flash Flood Watch, be sure to tune in to your radio or television for warnings. Be aware that intense, short bursts of rain may be particularly dangerous, especially after longer periods of heavy rainfall and damp weather.
- Listen for any unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together. A trickle of flowing or falling mud or debris may precede larger landslides. Moving debris can flow quickly and sometimes without warning.
- If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and for a change from clear to muddy water. Such changes may indicate activity upstream, so be prepared to move uphill quickly. Don't delay! Save yourself, not your belongings.
- Be especially alert when driving. Bridges may be washed out, and culverts overtopped. Do not cross flooding streams! Turn Around, Don't Drown! Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flows.
- Once a Flash Flood WARNING has been issued, consider leaving if it is safe to do so. The goal is to avoid low-lying roads, streams, and drainages. Remember that driving during an intense storm can be hazardous.
- If you remain at home, move to a second story if possible. Staying out of the path of a debris flow can save lives.

Talking to your family, friends and neighbors about how you can support one another during a disaster is an excellent way to prepare. To help in your emergency and disaster planning efforts, we have also included in your packet the following:

- A list of helpful websites
- The Prepare! Booklet = Checklists and 'how to' information for all hazards.
- Firewise Guide to Landscape and Construction. This guide walks you through simple steps that can help protect your home from future wildfires.