

## Washington Governor Extends Emergency Proclamation

### Local News

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Gov. Chris Gregoire tonight will extend an emergency proclamation declaring a State of Emergency for all counties east of the crest of the Cascades. The proclamation ensures continued air support from Washington's National Guard to help fight ongoing wildfires, and extends a burn ban through midnight Monday, Sept. 24th.

"Progress is being made, but we can't let down our guard," Gregoire said. "Across our state, we still have nearly 1,400 homes threatened by flames and thousands of people have been asked to evacuate. I want to make sure our fire crews have every resource possible and want to ensure we're taking every step to prevent new fires from starting."

Gregoire announced her decision to extend the proclamation while touring the town of Liberty in Kittitas County, where homeowners have been asked to evacuate. The town is currently threatened by the First Creek Fire burning four miles west of town, which has already caused road closures in the area.

"I am urging all families that have been asked to evacuate to find an alternative place to stay while fire crews contain the flames," Gregoire said. "By staying in their homes not only are people putting themselves in danger, but they're threatening the lives of first responders who may have to go into the fire to rescue them."

The proclamation extended today by the governor:

- Directs state agencies and departments to utilize state resources and to do everything reasonably possible to assist affected political subdivisions in an effort to respond to and recover from the fires;
- Orders into active state service the organized militia of Washington state to include the National Guard and the State Guard; and
- Instructs the Washington State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate all event-related assistance to the affected areas.

Additionally, the burn ban prohibits all outdoor burning, including but not limited to:

- Campfires
- Bonfires
- Residential yard debris clean-up, trash disposal, land clearing, weed abatement and agricultural burning activity
- Ignition of fireworks.

Liquid fueled or gas-fueled stoves are permitted provided the use is conducted over a non-flammable surface and at least five feet from flammable vegetation. Charcoal grills are permitted at private residences under the same conditions.

&ldquo;With no rain in sight and dry conditions, we are in for the long haul,&rdquo; said Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark. &ldquo;Local, state, federal, and Canadian firefighters are working to the limit to protect life and property. We need everyone&rsquo;s help to ensure that we do not have any human-caused fires in the next couple of weeks. Thank you to everyone for their help and cooperation.&rdquo;

Gregoire today also extended sympathies to the family and friends of a timber faller working to contain a blaze north of Wenatchee. The contract worker became ill on the fire line yesterday afternoon. He was treated by incident medical personnel and transported to a nearby hospital. He died yesterday evening.

&ldquo;My thoughts and prayers are with this man&rsquo;s family tonight and the entire firefighting community&rdquo; Gregoire said.

Meanwhile, Gregoire is urging Washingtonians to pay attention to air quality &ndash; as many parts of Eastern Washington are suffering from stagnant air and high pollution levels from smoke. Smoke from Eastern Washington wildfires will continue to affect communities near the fires over the next several days.

In some areas- including Wenatchee and Chelan - the air inversion and pollution levels are causing very unhealthy and hazardous air quality that could lead to aggravated respiratory problems, illness and even death for sensitive people. The worst air quality will be in the late night and morning hours because the smoke gets trapped near the ground during morning temperature inversions. Residents should take precautions by staying indoors, wearing masks if they need to go outside and check with their medical provider if they are having breathing problems.

For more information on air quality in Washington state, visit:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/Default.ltr.aspx>

The National Weather Service has issued a stagnant weather advisory to last through at least 5 p.m. on Wednesday for the following areas: Lewiston/Clarkston, lower Garfield and Asotin counties, the Wenatchee area, the Waterville Plateau, and the Kittitas and Yakima valleys. This includes the cities of Lewiston, Clarkston, Wenatchee, Chelan, Entiat, Cashmere, Waterville, Mansfield, Ellensburg, Thorp, Naches, Sunnyside, Toppenish and Yakima.