

## **Will the government shutdown affect disaster response in Grays Harbor?**

### **Local News**

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MONTESANO, Wash. - Since the federal government has shutdown for an unspecified amount of time, Deputy Director of the Grays Harbor County Emergency Management Agency Chuck Wallace answers the question "what are the impacts to local communities should a disaster occur during the shutdown?"

#### **The Good**

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The **Department of Homeland Security** will continue to operate as 80% of the staff is deemed essential. The agencies under Homeland Security are the TSA, Customs and Border Protection, Secret Service, **Coast Guard, FEMA** and immigration Customs Enforcement. Many personnel are considered essential who work on intelligence and cyber security. **Still a 20% reduction in staffing will cause delays to response.** According to the **National Weather Service**, the government shutdown will not cause any changes to the way they operate on a daily basis. The West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center will change its name today, to the **National Tsunami Warning Center** and will continue to deliver all information it normally does. The only changes that will occur will be that **National Weather Service** and **NOAA** off site training and visitations will be halted until a resolution is made by congress. **Washington State Emergency Management Division** will continue to operate as usual with no changes in service. **All local, tribal and county emergency preparedness services** will continue without interruption.

#### **The Bad**

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Should a significant disaster event impact the area, much of the government support personnel will NOT be immediately available due to the "shut down." **Estimates of 1.2 million federal employees will be furloughed.** Although all are not part of a disaster response to disaster, it is appropriate to believe any **disaster response and assistance will be delayed.** The **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** virtually shuts down entirely with the exception of a few personnel. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** will only keep minimal support for outbreak investigations, processing laboratory samples and a 24/7 Emergency Operations Center. The **Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board** will furlough 37 of 40 members with **no ability to respond to an incident.** **Chemical Spill Investigations** will be halted. All **Active Duty Military** members will remain on duty although their **paychecks may be delayed.** Any service member killed during the shutdown, the **families will NOT get death benefits** until the "shut down" is resolved.