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PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PORTLAND OR
400 AM MDT WED OCT 6 2004

...THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 3-9 IS WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN
IDAHO...OREGON...AND WASHINGTON...

...SNOW...ICE...AVALANCHE...BLIZZARDS...THE MOST COMMON OF WINTERS
MANY HAZARDS...

WINTER STORMS ARE A FREQUENT OCCURENCE ACROSS THE PACIFIC
NORTHWEST. MANY OF THESE STORMS BRING SNOW AMOUNTS THAT CAUSE
ROAD CLOSURES ESPECIALLY THROUGH MOUNTAIN PASSES. WIND IN
COMBINATION WITH THE SNOW CAN CAUSE REDUCED VISIBILITIES AND DEEP
SNOW DRIFTS. ALONG WITH THE HEAVY SNOW COMES AN AVALANCHE
THREAT IN AREAS OF STEEP TERRAIN. IN VALLEY
LOCATIONS...TEMPERATURES MAY BE NEAR FREEZING DURING THE DAY BUT
AFTER THE STORM PASSES TEMPERATURES PLUMMET CAUSING WET
ROADWAYS TO BECOME RIBBONS OF ICE. IN SOME VALLEYS...COOL AIR
TRAPPED NEAR THE SURFACE REMAINS BELOW FREEZING WHILE WARM AIR
ALOFT DROPS RAIN THROUGH THE SUB FREEZING AIR CAUSING FREEZING
RAIN.

ALL OF THESE HAZARDS ARE FORECAST AHEAD OF TIME BY YOUR LOCAL
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE. WINTER STORM WATCHES ARE
ISSUED 1 TO 2 DAYS AHEAD OF A STORMS ARRIVAL. WINTER STORM
WARNINGS...ICE STORM WARNINGS...AND HEAVY SNOW WARNINGS ARE
ISSUED WITH A DAY AND SOMETIMES TWO DAYS WARNING.

...WINTER STORM WARNING...

WINTER STORM WARINGS ARE ISSUED WHEN ANY COMBINATION OF
FREEZING RAIN...SLEET...WIND...AND SNOW OCCUR OVER AN AREA. WHEN
ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE ELEMENTS STRIKES AN AREA...A SPECIFIC WARNING
SUCH AS A HEAVY SNOW WARNING OR FREEZING RAIN WARNING WILL BE
ISSUED.

...HEAVY SNOW WARNING...

THE AMOUNT OF SNOW REQUIRED FOR A WARNING TO BE ISSUED VARIES BY
REGION AND ELEVATION. LOW LYING AREAS WICH NORMALLY RECEIVE LITTLE
SNOW ONLY REQUIRE 2 TO 4 INCHES FOR A WARNING. ON THE OTHER
HAND...IN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS WHERE NEARLY EVERY STROM BRINGS AT
LEAST 6 INCHES OF SNOW...A WARNING REQUIRES 8 TO 10 INCHES OR MORE.
IN GENERAL...A HEAVY SNOW WARNING MEANS THAT ROAD CREWS WILL

HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY KEEPING ROADS OPEN AND SNOW FREE MAKING TRAVEL DIFFICULT AT BEST...AND IMPOSSIBLE AT WORST.

...BLIZZARD WARNINGS...

THE TERM BLIZZARD IS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERE WINTER WEATHER IN THE NORTHERN PLAINS WHERE NORTHWEST WINDS BRING SNOW AND FRIGID TEMPERATURES. WHILE RELATIVELY COMMON IN THE PLAINS...BLIZZARDS OR NEAR BLIZZARD CONDITIONS ALSO HAPPEN IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DEFINES A BLIZZARD AS A COMBINATION OF WIND 35 MPH OR GREATER AND SNOW WITH VISIBILITIES FREQUENTLY BELOW 1/4 MILE.

...ICE STORMS...

ICE STORMS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST ARE AN INFREQUENT OCCURRENCE...BUT CAN BE EXTREMELY DAMAGING. ACROSS INTERIOR LOCATIONS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST...VALLEY LOCATIONS WILL HAVE TEMPERATURES BELOW FREEZING WHEN A WARM WINTER STORM BLOWS OVERHEAD. RAIN FALLING OUT OF THE STORM PASSES THROUGH THE SUB FREEZING AIR NEAR THE SURFACE AND FREEZES ON EVERYTHING. THESE CONDITIONS CAUSE TREES TO SNAP...POWER LINES TO FALL...AND MAKE ROADS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO NAVIGATE.

...AVALANCHE...

THOUSANDS OF AVALANCHES OCCUR EACH WINTER IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. WITH THE ENORMOUS POPULARITY OF WINTER SPORTS...THIS POSES A RISK TO SKIERS...HIKERS AND SNOWMOBILERS. THIS RISK IS VERY REAL...EACH YEAR PEOPLE LOSE THEIR LIVES WHEN AVALANCHES BURRY THEM. WHILE THOUSANDS OF AVALANCHES OCCUR IN THE BACK COUNTRY...AVALANCHES CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE THE SLOPE IS STEEP ENOUGH WITH A HEAVY SNOW LOAD. AVALANCHES TYPICALLY OCCUR DURING OR JUST AFTER SNOWSTORMS AND MOST OCCUR ON A SLOPE OF 30 TO 45 DEGREES. BY WAITING 36 HOURS AFTER A BIG SNOWSTORM YOU MAY ALLOW THE SNOW TO SETTLE. IF YOU STAY IN VALLEYS AWAY FROM AVALANCHE CHUTES...IN STANDS OF DENSE TREES...OR ON GENTLE SLOPES YOU CAN MINIMIZE YOUR RISK TO AVALANCHES.

...AVALANCHE SAFETY RULES...

NEVER TRAVEL ALONE. ALWAYS HAVE ONE OR MORE COMPANIONS. IF YOU ARE ALONE AND GET TRAPPED BY AN AVALANCHE...YOU MAY NOT BE FOUND UNTIL SPRING.

IF CROSSING A SLOPE THAT MAY BE PRONE TO AVALANCHES...DO IT ONE PERSON AT A TIME. YOU WANT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT ON YOUR PARTY IF AN AVALANCHE IS ACCIDENTLY RELEASED.

WHEN WINTER STORMS THREATEN...AVOID TRAVEL IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

ROAD CREWS WORK HARD TO KEEP ROADS OPEN...STUCK CARS ONLY MAKE THEIR JOB HARDER.

WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK CONTINUES THROUGH OCTOBER 9 IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. THIS IS AN EXCELLENT TIME FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS...FAMILIES...BUSINESSES...SCHOOLS...RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS TO REVIEW THEIR WINTER WEATHER PREPAREDNESS PLANS.

THIS MESSAGE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR LOCAL NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE STAFF AND YOUR LOCAL AND STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS.