Disaster Digest

Director’s Corner

Steve Charvat, UWEM Director

Congratulations everyone! We survived yet another predicted Doomsday end-of-the-world scenario. The December 21st end of the ancient Mayan calendar proved to be yet another in a long string of failed predictions. Despite all the crazy social media postings, funny late night TV skits and over-the-top Hollywood movies on the topic, we once again realized that the predictions all fizzled out and we went back to our normal routines the day after. However, some of us actually enjoyed hearing about these predictions and actually tried to harness the public interest in them to get out the message of all-hazards disaster preparedness. OK, granted, there is no amount of canned goods, batteries and flashlights, water and first aid classes that will protect you from Armageddon, but we feel that even small steps now can prepare you, your family, your co-workers and the UW for any kind of disaster – small or large.

Just over 5 years ago, the Seattle area experienced the famous “Hanukkah Eve Storm” which plunged parts of the Puget Sound area into darkness with no power for almost 2 weeks. Not an earthquake, but a simple windstorm reminded us all of our reliance on something as simple as electricity to perform our daily life’s tasks. As 2013 begins, I challenge each Disaster Digest reader to consider a different New Year’s Resolution. Why continue to recycle the usual “give up smoking,” “start eating healthier,” or “join a gym” resolutions that we usually either give up in a month or never even start? Why not resolve to be better prepared for emergencies or disasters? It is simple, achievable and easy to start! UWEM has resources, tools and expertise to help you begin! Our website has step-by-step, easy to follow procedures and FREE classes to get you started on your Path to Preparedness. Every journey begins with a first step. Resolve to make 2013 your Year to Be (more) prepared for any disaster, emergency or crisis. UWEM is here to help.

Here is wishing our readers a Happy and Healthy New Year….
Partner of the Quarter: Officer Van Leuven

The success of Emergency Management is a role built on strong partnerships. During a disaster you don’t want to be calling a stranger for assistance but a trusted partner. As has been our practice for the past 2 years, the UW’s institution-wide Emergency Management Planning Committee (EMPC) regularly recognizes the importance of these building partnerships and continues to cultivate critical relationships across the university community. Each quarter UWEM, along with the EMPC, selects a member of the campus community that exemplifies this important partnership. This quarter (October – December 2012) the EMPC has selected UWPD Officer Tanesha Van Leuven to be awarded of Partner of the Quarter. Since taking on her duties in UWPD Crime Prevention she has been an outstanding partner with UWEM in our outreach efforts to the UW community.

Recently Officer VanLeuven helped created a new campus outreach tool known as the Wheel of Misfortune. She recognized there was a gap missing between the outreach of our student population and staff/faculty. We needed something fun that would engage our students and make them want to stop and talk safety and security with us. Officer Van Leuven was instrumental in the creation and deployment of this new outreach tool. The success of these efforts was measured throughout the month of October as UWEM, EH&S and UWPD put on a roadshow across campus teaching people about earthquake awareness, fire safety and personal security. We engaged with more than 1,300 members of the community within a three week period, tripling our numbers from past events!

Officer Van Leuven possesses a unique skill in her ability to connect with our community. Students and staff do not see her as an intimidating officer but as an approachable confidant and friend. When seen on campus at outreach events people approach her with ease and freely ask questions. A part of our job is to inform the UW community about living and working in a safe environment. Together with the efforts of Officer Van Leuven we continue to bring awareness as a united front for the safety and security of the University of Washington.
New UW Indoor Alert System

The UW now has a brand-new tool in its ever-expanding toolbox for notifying our campus residents of immediate threats and hazards impacting the Seattle campus. Officially called the “UW Indoor Alert System” (as opposed to the 12 Blue Outdoor Alert kiosks scattered throughout the Seattle campus), the new UW Indoor Alert system was funded by an $8 million capital project from the Washington State Legislature. It has replaced the legacy fire alarm monitoring system and now provides a new mass notification system to comply with recent federal legislative changes for campus emergencies. The original project was expanded to include emergency communications, which is used to provide information and instructions to people in the buildings using voice and/or visual communication methods for all major buildings on the Seattle campus. UW Indoor Alert provides additional mass notification within all major buildings and is used to disseminate official information during emergencies or crisis situations that may disrupt the normal operation of the UW or threaten the health or safety of members of the UW community. Messages are sent using the mass notification capabilities of the fire alarm system inside buildings. Full broadcast capabilities are available in approximately 95 buildings. Paging in common areas or reader boards are available in approximately 45 additional buildings and parking garages. It provides active notification to people within earshot of the broadcast. The UW’s Crisis Communication Team oversees the system, which can be activated 24/7 by trained personnel in the UW Police Department. The system has the ability to broadcast pre-scripted as well as ad-hoc messages in case of an immediate threat to building residents. Messages are usually less detailed and shorter, but can be customized to provide more detail as needed. Testing and training have been completed and the system is now ready for use. This system will only be used for extreme emergencies where there is an immediate threat to life and safety and not for smaller incidents.

When HAM is More Than a Savory Meat Option

Many of us were sad to see the old SEMOC (Special Events Operations Mobile Operations Command) vehicle ride into the sunset last month as it was officially sent to UW Surplus and replaced by a new UW Police command vehicle. However, the UW’s emergency operations center (EOC) did receive an added benefit from the recent sale. Prior to being sold for scrap, the old SEMOC was stripped of its communications equipment and supplies and the EOC recently received one of its two amateur radios. Most people call these units “Ham Radios”, but we choose to refer to them as amateur radio broadcast transceiver stations. Over the next few months, UWEM staff will be working with the UW Tower management, UW-IT staff and other volunteers to install, test and program this vital new tool in our EOC. While the EOC currently has a number of other ways of communicating to the outside world (phones, UHF/VHF radios, faxes, computers and even satellite phone), we were still missing a core tool used in command centers worldwide: an amateur radio base station from which we could monitor and broadcast emergency information in the event that all other modes of communications were down! Once we install the new base station, UWEM staff will begin to develop policies, procedures and protocols for the integration of this new base station into our campus’ emergency notification systems. In addition, we are hoping to solicit the interest and participation of any volunteer student and staff HAM radio operators to provide their time and expertise to help us develop the capability to utilize this back-up communications tool to its full advantage. Want to help, contact Steve Charvat (charvat@uw.edu) call-sign KD7CAA or Scott Preston (scottpre@uw.edu) call-sign KE7MZG. STAY TUNED.....
Welcome New Emergency Managers to the UW Community!

Congratulations!

Jade Broglio Joins UW Bothell

In October of 2012 a new Emergency Manager position was created to oversee UW Bothell, Cascadia and Edmonds Community College. This is a great new opportunity to help unite these campuses in emergency planning. The lucky winner of this fabulous new position was Jade Broglio. She brings over 7 years experience in all phases of the Emergency Management cycle. She has responded to local and national disasters and had the opportunity to write Emergency Operations Center Operations guides, Annexes to city Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans and helped develop the NW CERT Expo for Snohomish County before it became a Citizens Corp event. She has experience responding to and coordinating efforts in weather and health related local events as well as Level 5 disasters in hurricane stricken areas of Florida. Jade enjoys teaching others how to prepare in their homes, work areas and communities so that when things go wrong, it is easier to get them back to right. Welcome Jade to the UW Emergency Management family.
In July of 2012, the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) gained a new Emergency Preparedness Manager, Danica Little. Originally from nearby Snohomish, WA, Danica completed her B.S. in Community Health from Western Washington University in 1998 and is currently working on her Master of Health Administration degree here at University of Washington with a projected completion in August 2013. Her career in Public Health began in the Snohomish Health District in 1999, then moved to Public Health Emergency Management in 2002 for Region 1, for which the Snohomish Health District was the lead agency (Region 1 includes Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan Counties). 2005 saw Danica head south to join the King County Healthcare Coalition as the Hospital Preparedness Manager, eventually switching to Training & Exercise Manager for the Coalition. Having just hit the 10-year mark working in hospitals and healthcare organizations on emergency preparedness, UWMC is already beginning to benefit from the experience of a veteran professional. “The Medical Center has an incredibly talented and bright staff whose collaborative nature and support for emergency management makes doing my job very enjoyable,” says Danica. She has already had a chance to work with her team during the recent opening of the Montlake Tower, which saw movement of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) into its new home. Danica has also joined the Emergency Management Planning Committee as the UWMC representative, helping to reinforce partnerships with emergency management representatives across the UW community. Welcome aboard, Danica!

In June of 2012 Pascal Schuback left his job at King County Emergency Management where he served for three years as an Emergency Management Program Manager 2 to join the University of Washington as the Global Travel Security & Information Manager. He is coordinating the Global Emergency Management Plan, and is responsible for situational awareness, continuity and response to global incidents as they affect UW students, faculty and staff. Pascal is a board member of CrisisCommons, a global network of volunteers who use creative problem solving and open technologies to help people, agencies and communities in times of crisis. He has been working on numerous projects, including integrating social media, aiding public safety & disaster response globally, using, as example, Virtual Operations Support Teams for incidents including forest fires; flooding; earthquakes and winter storms globally and building a university based global situational awareness tool. He is currently also working on the Humanitarian ToolBox and a new model of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) based emergency management delivery. He received a MPA from the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University and is a certified Emergency Manager. Pascal would be classified as a geek.
Click here for your Family Emergency Preparedness Checklist
Wheedle Wakes to Join Take Winter by Storm

For true Washingtonians the Wheedle is a piece of our history. The large, round, furry character came to life in a children’s story book written in the early 1970s known as The Wheedle on the Needle. From 1978 through 1985 the Wheedle was the official mascot of the Seattle SuperSonics being front and center when they won the NBA Championship in 1979. The Wheedle also became the official mascot of the Space Needle in the late 70’s early 80’s. Then in the 90’s the KOMO news station adopted the Wheedle as their mascot. For those of us who grew up in Seattle during this time the Wheedle has been a tried and true character that is synonymous with Seattle.

It is time once again to wake the Wheedle from his sound slumber above the Space Needle and introduce him to the next generation. The Take Winter by Storm preparedness campaign has adopted the Wheedle as their new mascot.

There’s a Wheedle on the Needle, I know just what you’re thinking, but if you look up late at night you’ll see his red nose blinking.

Once upon forever the Wheeled lived on Mount Rainier, but the noise of happy whistling was shrill upon his ears.

He packed his bag with storm clouds and thundered into town, then climbed up on the Needle and let the rain pour down.

But the Seattle folks sewed a gift; cooperation did abound. They made a pair of earmuffs to muffle all the sounds.

But just before he fell asleep so many years ago, the sky flashed bright with lightning streaks and the wind began to blow.

The biggest storm in history tore through the great Northwest. A storm with mighty winds and rains; scary in excess.

Limbs of trees and houses went soaring through the air. Shingles, leaves and parts of cars were flying everywhere.

That storm is but a memory. But the Wheedle is still very scared. And every day he promises, “Next time I’ll be prepared!”

For the Wheedle knows, as should you, big storms will happen again. They Wheedle knows, as should you, it’s not an IF, but WHEN!

The Wheedle on the Needle author Stephen Cosgrove & illustrator Robin James
Read more about how the Wheedle is preparing for winter.

Check out www.takewinterbystorm.org for winter weather preparedness tips and resources for Western Washington.
UWEM Staff Responds to Hurricane Sandy

Scott Preston, the UW’s Business Continuity Manager, deployed to Hurricane Sandy with the Seattle Metro Incident Management Team (IMT) from November 15-19, 2012. The Seattle IMT was assigned to shadow and assist two other IMT’s from Massachusetts and Phoenix.

The IMT’s were working under the authority of the City of New York Office of Emergency Management and were assigned to the Logistics Staging Area (LSA) at citiLink field in Queens, NY, home of the Mets. The LSA was the main supply area for light-trees, generators and pumps that were being used around the impact areas of the City. All told, there were approximately 7,000 pieces of equipment that were being used in some fashion.

The days were long and living conditions, while not roughing in a tent on the ground, were not optimal either. We crammed 5 people on military-style cots into a room about 20’x10’. We were glad to be there, though. Our team was assigned primarily to provide additional planning support to the LSA by helping to create the incident action plan and documents regarding what resources were in service and what resources needed to be ordered.

Scott often says that no incident management plan survives contact with reality and Hurricane Sandy was no different. The realities and challenges of a real world incident can generally be summed up into 5 categories of concern:

**The Fog of Disaster**: If it isn’t happening in your presence, you don’t really know what’s going on. Reports from others at the scene may be more accurate or less accurate, but will always be filtered through personal knowledge and experience of the individual reporting the information.

**Resource Challenges**: Getting the rights stuff and personnel to the right place at the right time in the right quantity to ensure an effective support of the response. Also understanding that scarcity of resources means that competition with other organizations wanting the same resources becomes an immediate issue in a large-scale incident.

**The Tyranny of Time**: The longer it takes to respond to a problem, the more difficult it will be to respond and resolve that problem. A perfect example of this concept was the devastating fire in Breezy Point (an area of NY City that was part of the main impact zone). Fire trucks were unable to effectively fight the fire due to the flood waters that were still in the area. As a result, more than 80 homes were a total loss from the fire.
Communications Challenges: The first “victim” of any incident is the ability to communicate. It’s also the first capability that must be recovered in order to have an effective incident response. Communication is much more than just having a radio— it’s the ability to share information in meaningful way that contributes to the success of the incident response and management.

Personalities and Politics: This is a new category I added to this concept after witnessing first-hand some of the issues behind the scenes at Hurricane Sandy. I’m convinced that your average, every day person is basically a good person at heart and will be altruistic in a disaster. Essentially neighbors helping neighbors when needed. However, I am forced to admit that there is another social phenomenon at work: opportunists. There is a certain group of society who will see a disaster as an opportunity for inappropriate personal or political gain. My team saw evidence of this as various levels of government disagreed with each other on minor issues or even outright undermined one another in favor of some political agenda. We also saw examples where private companies did similar things to take advantage of Hurricane Sandy for profit. Fortunately, not everyone is like this, but it bears remembering that there are some who will pursue a political or financial opportunity at the expense of others, even in the midst of a major disaster.

Our experience was by far more positive than not. While we did see some shocking examples of dysfunction, we also saw amazing acts of selfless service. One of the incident management teams, the one from Phoenix, had been there for a week prior to us and would be there for a several days after we had left. This team was working 18+ hour days, non-stop for 14 days straight (including right through Thanksgiving) and would have worked longer if needed. I was deeply impressed with the selfless dedication of these professionals. Their names will never be known to the people of New York and in truth, the team members would probably be embarrassed to be recognized and praised for their service. I know them though, and am honored to have had the privilege to work beside them for a short time.

Stanton Island, NY. Left to Right:
- Darian Davis: Seattle Public Utilities
- Chris Steel: Seattle Police Department
- Joel Williams: Seattle Police Department
- Elenka Jarolimek: Seattle Fleet Services
- Scott Preston: University of Washington Emergency Management
- Prewitt Small: Phoenix Fire Department
Hurricane Sandy:
A Reminder of What Could Happen Here

Hurricane Sandy has once again reset the bar on what we think of when we think of disaster and a major urban city. Few of us thought of the words hurricane and New York in the same context before Hurricane Sandy. It seemed inconceivable that a city as powerful as New York could have areas of such devastation as to have total disruption of all critical infrastructures for several weeks. Mother Nature has a way of reminding us how insignificant we are in the world at large, at times.

There is no place on Earth that isn’t subject to the possibility of some form of natural calamity. The complex natural cycles that control weather, temperature, plate tectonics and a whole host of environmental phenomena are completely unimpressed with humans and our cities. These cycles have existed for as long as the Earth has been around and will continue long after our cities are dust.

What can we do in the face of such forces of nature? Be prepared. There is no way to stop a hurricane or an earthquake. All we can do is be prepared to manage the after-effects of the incident. We do that by ensuring we are prepared as individuals and as an institution. Individual preparedness includes having an emergency kit at home, at work and even in a commuter’s bag. It also includes having an out of area contact plan for the family and ensuring that you have extra food and water for at least three days (preferably much longer, if feasible) so that you can survive if our regional infrastructure is disrupted and there is no power, water, gas, sewer or operable roads.

Institutionally, it means helping our students, staff and faculty be better prepared, but also ensuring that our primary academic, research and administrative business is made resilient so as to avoid disruption and also be more efficient in recovery, should disruption occur. Here at the University of Washington, we call this business, academic and research continuity and it is the core of our “BARC” program.

We need not live in fear of the natural cycles that impact our cities and our lives. We do need to be prudently aware of the potential for disruption from these cycles and take steps to prepare, as best as we can, for them.

UW Emergency Management specializes in both individual and institutional preparedness. If you’d like our help, feel free to contact us: disaster@uw.edu
What Can the Hobbit Teach us About Disasters

As I (Scott Preston) write this, I have not seen the movie “The Hobbit”, but being an unabashed, life-long geek, I am intimately familiar with the book from J.R.R. Tolkien. As an emergency manager I can draw parallels between the main hero, Bilbo Baggins and us as the common, everyday person to learn about disasters and personal preparedness from Bilbo’s adventures. Here are a few observations that I’d like to share:

1. **Food Storage.** Hobbits LOVE to eat. So do most humans. Hobbit emergency managers probably didn’t have to push that food storage message too hard. Most hobbits keep a well-stocked pantry out of habit. Ask yourself: if you suddenly had an emergency, disaster or a troop of hungry dwarves show up at your door, are you prepared enough to manage the incident at home without needing to run to the store right away? Could you manage for 3 days or more (dwarves LOVE to party – they could be with you for a while)?

2. **Be prepared, everywhere.** Poor Bilbo had to race from his home in Bag-End to the adventure on the road with little more than the clothes on his back. If you read the book, he’ll often lament that he didn’t have enough handkerchiefs and desperately missed the luxuries of home. We never know when adventure, a mishap or a mysterious old wizard may come knocking on our door. We should plan to be prepared, even when out and about on the road, at work or at school. Having a few extra supplies with us in a backpack, purse or commuter’s bag can give us more options when it comes to food, water, warmth, shelter, etc. and can make all the difference in an emergency.

3. **You don’t need magic to be a hero.** Yes, Bilbo finds a magic ring during his encounter with Gollum, but the real magic happens when Bilbo begins to believe in himself giving him the courage to rescue the hapless dwarves first from a group of hungry spiders and later from imprisonment by suspicious elves. Bilbo developed a survivor mindset. This, more than anything else, is the key to successfully coming out of an emergency situation alive. If you care to read an excellent book on the subject, try: ‘Deep Survival: Who lives, Who Dies and Why’ by Laurence Gonzales. The will to survive is more critical to any emergency than a special piece of equipment, fancy gear or a magic ring.

4. **It’s good to have friends.** Throughout the book, Bilbo and his company of dwarves are aided by various people: the elves, the eagles, Beorn the Woodsman, the Lakemen and more dwarves. During times of disaster, we all need extra help. Being prepared doesn’t replace the need to help each other; it just enables us to have more options when helping each other. No person is an island unto themselves during a disaster, no matter what some “prepper” shows portray.

5. **Adventures never end.** Bilbo comes back from his adventures, a very different Hobbit than when he left. He was stronger, more confident and decisive. His adventure empowered him. Disasters, emergencies and incidents fundamentally change people. We (hopefully!) learn how to better manage the difficulties and challenges of such incidents. The thing to remember is that life is full of such opportunities. There will never be a place we can go to or a time when we can say “nothing can happen here”. All sorts of hazards can happen anywhere. Be prepared for them and see them for the opportunities they are.

Tolkien drew a lot of his inspiration for his written work from his own rather adventurous life. Look around at other great literary examples and see what gems of wisdom you can find to help yourself be better prepared for your own adventures.

UWEM specializes in helping people prepare for unexpected adventures. We’d be happy to show you how to be prepared for earthquakes, zombies, dragons or a party of dwarves. disaster@uw.edu or www.huskyem.org
GSOC Tour

Members of our team had the privilege of touring Microsoft’s Global Security Operations Center (GSOC) in Redmond recently. The GSOC is one of three facilities around the world that coordinates the safety and security of the company’s infrastructure and more than 180,000 employees and vendors. The operations center is the home to Microsoft employees who monitor the status of the company through observing data and analytics which look for anomalies throughout its assigned region. The presentation included a real life event where an out of control car crashed into the front of the GSOC, engulfing the side of the building in flames and forcing its duties to be immediately transferred over to one of the other locations. How’s that for real life testing!

The GSOC employees were nice enough to share some of their operational software from SharePoint, the same software UWEM is using to improve and build its situation awareness tool. This was a great example of the software developer themselves sharing some helpful tools to improve our own EOC. Thanks Microsoft for being in our backyard!

Preparing for the End of the World

On 12-12-12@12:00 UW-IT celebrated the impending “end of the world” (according to the Mayan calendar) with an emergency response open house for its staff. UW-IT opened its Unit Response Center (URC) so people could learn how the organization is prepared to respond to disasters like network and communication outages, floods, earthquakes, Zombies, “end of the world” and other scary things.

Open house visitors were treated to a tour of the URC facility which is set up 24/7 with computers, telephones, and other tools and resources to help respond to emergencies and disasters. The URC is also stocked with emergency freeze dried food, MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and water for URC responders as well as for staff who may be unable to get home.

Scott Preston and Siri McLean from UWEM were also on hand to promote personal emergency preparedness. Their “Wheel of Misfortune” was a big hit and a great way to get people thinking about preparedness.
American Red Cross Apps

In the wake of our incredibly successful participation in The Great Shakeout (patting self on back and tooting own horn) we thought it helpful to include just a little more information. Unless you’re still rocking an old flip phone or even worse a pager, you probably spend a large amount of time on your smartphones or tablets these days. While you’re undoubtedly addicted to the latest version of Angry Birds or Words With Friends, there are some great preparedness and response apps that while not as addicting are far more useful. The Red Cross has five fantastic mobile apps focusing on 5 distinct areas; hurricanes, locating shelters, first aid, wildfire, and earthquakes. Each app is designed perfectly and works flawlessly, delivering lifesaving information in real-time. Taking the Earthquake App for a more in-depth spin revealed some hidden gems in an amazing well designed package. The app excels at including social media, games, and local history regarding earthquakes in your area. Some worthy standout features include…

- Step-by-step instructions let you know what to do even before/during/after an earthquake, even with no data connectivity.
- Get notified when an earthquake occurs with notifications generated by the United States Geological Survey (USGS).
- See the perceived shaking impact to your area or those of loved-ones.
- Let family and friends know you are okay with the customizable “I’m Safe” alert for Facebook, Twitter, email and text.
- Find open Red Cross shelters in your area when you need help.
- Stay safe when the lights are out with the Toolkit, including a strobe light, flashlight and audible alert functions.
- Prepare for the worst by learning how to assemble an emergency kit for your family in the event of power outage or evacuation.
- Empower your family to stay safe and remain calm in an emergency by learning how to make and practice an emergency plan.
- Earn badges that you can share with your friends and show off your earthquake knowledge with interactive quizzes.
- See an illustrated history of earthquakes in your area.
- Know to what to do about food and drinking water when your area has been impacted by floods and power outages.

Download Red Cross apps at redcross.org/mobileapps
As we begin a new year in the heart of winter’s icy grasp, memories quickly turn to 2012’s “Snowmageddon” for the Seattle area. Widespread snow accumulation caused significant disruptions to people’s personal & professional lives, with one of the most-common impacts being transportation. In an urban area that relies heavily on public and private transportation, keeping people informed of current conditions goes a long way toward reducing stress when winter weather strikes Puget Sound. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has a Winter Weather page that shares the agency’s overall plan for winter transportation management, shows which roads & bridges have priority for snow plow operations and has even capitalized on web-based technology to show up-to-the-minute conditions of which roads have been treated with preventative or responsive maintenance for snow & ice removal. This makes it easier to gain “situational awareness” from work, home or via mobile devices before heading outdoors into a potentially elongated wait at your local bus stop or hazardous road conditions on nearby highways and I-5 entrances & exits (remember: raised bridges and ramps often freeze earlier and harder than surface streets.) Click on the following link to stay warm & informed this winter! http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/winterweather.htm

Urban Fireplace Safety

As the mercury drops, home utility bills often rise as residents crank up the thermostat in an attempt to remain comfortable. For some lucky renters or urban homeowners, the option of using their fireplace is a way to keep their home expenses down while providing seasonal opportunities to gather friends & family together for an afternoon or evening. Heating fires account for 36% of home fires in rural areas every year, according to FEMA. Many of these are sparked by build-up of creosote in chimneys & stovepipes; creosote is a by-product of burning wood. It is important to have your fireplace’s chimney or wood stove’s stovepipe inspected and cleaned by a certified specialist annually to avoid excess creosote deposits. If your fireplace has glass doors, leave them open while the fire burns to reduce the creosote build-up in your chimney; make sure to use any metal mesh screens included to keep sparks & embers from being ejected from your fireplace and causing a fire hazard. Lastly, make sure you only use dry, hard wood or wood pellets as fuel; soft woods or moist/damp wood produce excess smoke, which can produce excess creosote. Following these simple tips will help you & your family stay warm and stay safe this winter!
January: Action Plans
An earthquake is a sudden release of pent-up energy along a fault line in the earth’s crust. Without warning, the ground under your feet will begin to shake and roll. A timely response is critical. Gas leaks may have occurred, which could lead to fire and explosion. People may be injured. What you do in the first hour following an earthquake can save lives, reduce the severity of injuries, and save property.

February: Out of Area Contact
If you are separated from your loved ones when disasters strike, you immediately will wonder how and where they are. The stress of the event may make it difficult to remember even routine information, like phone numbers. Consequently, we recommend that every household member have an out-of-area contact card in a wallet, purse, or backpack at all times.

March: Storing Water
Water is essential for survival. The ground trembling and shaking caused by earthquakes can crack or break the lines that bring fresh water to your house. You may have to rely for three days or more on the water you have stored.

HELP WANTED! UW Emergency Management is looking for volunteers to be trained and ready to work in the Emergency Operations Center upon activation. If you are interested in learning more about this wonderful opportunity please email: disaster@uw.edu

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