

Landslides and Mud Flows

Landslides and mudflows usually strike without warning. The force of rocks, soil or other debris moving down a slope can devastate anything in its path.

Before a landslide

- Your county geologist or county planning department may have specific information on areas vulnerable to landslides. Consult a professional geotechnical expert for advice on corrective measures you can take.

Insurance

- Mudflow is covered by flood insurance policies from the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood insurance can be purchased through a local insurance agency.

Minimize home hazards

- Plant ground cover on slopes to stabilize the land, and build retaining walls.
- Build channels or deflection walls to direct the flow around buildings.
- Remember: if you build walls to divert debris flow and the flow lands on a neighbor's property, you may be liable for damages.

Make evacuation plans

- Plan at least two evacuation routes since roads may become blocked or closed.

Learn to recognize the landslide warning signs

- Doors or windows begin to stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick or foundations.

- Outside walls, walks or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles or trees tilt or move.
- You hear a faint rumbling sound that increases in volume as the landslide nears. The ground slopes downward in one specific direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.

During a landslide

If inside a building:

- Stay inside.
- Take cover under a desk, table, or other piece of sturdy furniture.

If outdoors:

- Run to the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path.
- If rocks and other debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter such as a group of trees or a building
- If escape is not possible, curl into a tight ball and protect your head.

After a landslide

- Remember that flooding may occur after a mudflow or a landslide

- Stay away from the slide area, there may be danger of additional slides.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide area. Give first aid.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance – infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities.
- Listen to battery-operated radio or television for emergency information.
- Check for damaged utility lines. Report any damage to the utility company.
- Check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible. Erosion caused by loss of ground cover can lead to flash flooding.



Washington State Department of Health
PO Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890
Web Site: www.doh.wa.gov
360-236-4027
(800) 525-0127