April happens to be my favorite month of the year not only because the cherry blossoms are in bloom, but because it is Disaster Preparedness Month in Washington State!

The great northwest is no stranger to natural disasters. In fact Washington State ranks #1 for natural disasters with the most common being weather related.

**Spring Quarter**

**April: 72-Hour Comfort Kit**

You may be on your own for at least 3 days following a disaster. Have emergency supplies available to you and your family.

**May: Important Documents**

You may need financial assistance after a disaster. Have copies and access to necessary documents.

**June: Extended Events**

The inconvenience and discomfort a disaster causes can be reduced by planning alternate ways to take care of your needs.

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On March 4th, protestors across the Nation exercised their civil rights to public assembly and free speech and let their voices be heard on various university campuses. The University of Washington was no different. In order to ensure the protestors and the public a safe environment, the University’s Police, Emergency Management and EH&S offices collaborated on planning and incident management prior to and during the protest activities. This collaboration represented a best-effort by the University to manage the complex communications and coordination with other UW departments at the City of Seattle and King County Metro.

Some universities in other parts of the Nation experienced different levels of violence and property destruction during their protest events. The University of Washington is proud to say that no such activities occurred during our protests. This success is a testament to the professionalism of the staff of the UWPD, UWEM, EH&S and their off-campus partners in working together maintain the balance between public safety and upholding the protestor’s right to lawful exercise of civil rights.
LEAN Arrives

UW Emergency Management has joined ranks with the rest of our Facilities Services and F2 compatriots in learning about and embracing the LEAN process improvement method. By the end of April, all UWEM staff will have completed the daylong LEAN training. While our small department has very few manual or complex processes and activities, we are planning on identifying 2-3 activities over the next year to apply the LEAN concepts. As part of our ongoing “continuous improvement” process, UWEM will be meeting as a team to prioritize and tackle those projects/initiatives/activities that will have the most immediate impact to our customers: reducing response time, improving customer satisfaction and/or eliminating or reducing waste. We welcome your input for suggestions as our customers and clients on proposed LEAN activities.

Evacuation Jacket for Fluffy

What will they think of next? Actually why didn’t I think of this? My cats are like my children and they need their own personal preparedness kit. Why not make them carry it themselves? A company in Japan has come up with a solution for all pet-owners, a Pet Emergency Evacuation Jacket. Made from the same flame-retardant material that firefighters use, this suit protects from heat and includes a sturdy handle to controlling and transporting frantic pets.

The evacuation jacket contains a rain hat, rubber booties to protect the paws, aromatherapy oil to soothe stressed out cats and dogs, food, water packets, a bowl, a muzzle, first-aid gloves, mini-radio, emergency whistle, a waterproof ID capsule for the animals documentations and a bell should they become lost. These kits come in three difference sizes and can be purchased at www.japantrendshop.com for $475.

“Keep your pets safe with a free pet safety pack from ASPCA! In the event of an emergency, our pet rescue window decal alerts rescue personnel that pets are inside your home.” Check out their website to order yours today. ASPCA
Laboratory Medicine/UWMC Receives 2009 Internal Grant

Each year UW Emergency Management (UWEM) provides a limited number of short-term, one time emergency management grants to internal UW departments and operating units. These annual UW funds are provided to support internal programs that improve the overall emergency preparedness efforts for the campus community.

For year 2009, one of the chosen recipients was the Laboratory Medicine department of the UW Medical Center. The grant provided seismic mitigation of large items and critical lab equipment in the clinical laboratory spaces at the UWMD. Seismic restraints were purchased and installed for equipment located in the Satellite Laboratory. Laboratory results are estimated to provide 80% of the information physicians need to diagnose and treat patients therefore the clinical laboratory is a critical piece of the UW Medical Center’s infrastructure. The laboratory contains items such as refrigerators, freezers, chemical storage cabinets, laboratory analyzes and computers.

New BARC Planning Workgroup

There is a new workgroup meeting monthly in Gerberding Hall. The Business, Academic and Research Continuity (BARC) workgroup is designed to support those business, academic and research units at the University with their emergency planning efforts. The workgroup is sponsored by UW Emergency Management and managed by Scott Preston who is the UW’s Business Continuity Manager. The workgroup is intended to be an informal opportunity where units at all level of the emergency planning cycle from brand-new to old veterans can share ideas, learn new techniques and generally help each other improve the overall emergency and disaster preparedness of the University.

The next scheduled meeting of the workgroup is April 27 at 1:00 PM in Gerberding Hall, room 142. For more information, please contact Scott Preston at scottpre@uw.edu or 206-897-1882.

UW Incident Coordination Team Proposed

UW Emergency Management is currently working with UW Police, EH&S, News and Information, Facilities Services and UW Technology to examine the value of creating a team that would assist the UW Police on incidents that exceed the resources of an average, daily response but do not require the activation of the University’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Tentatively called the Incident Coordination Team (ICT), it would be composed of specially trained members of various University business units to help meet the complex needs of a situation that requires a higher than usual amount of communication and coordination between the University units and off-campus partners.
UWEM Goes to Africa

From March 19-26, UWEM Director Steve Charvat was in Ghana, Africa teaching emergency and crisis management to various national officials in this west African country. Hosted by the University of Ghana’ Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and funded through a cooperative agreement between the US State Department and the National Guard Bureau, this weeklong training provided hands-on training for 25 emergency and crisis response personnel. The focus for this training was to provide national and international “best practices” for disaster planning, mitigation, response and recovery. Not only did the Ghanian students learn the “American Way” but Steve also built additional international relationships and professional friendships that will last a lifetime. The Ghanian disaster management program is very robust, and while they operate quite differently from the US, they also deal with many similar problems such as flooding, heat waves, wild land fires, insect infestations and earthquakes --- many similarities to Western Washington. Little known factoids about Ghana: This is the only African country visited to date by President Obama, it is the oldest democratically-elected national government in all of Africa, and the current Chancellor of the University of Ghana is the past General Secretary of the United Nations: Mr. Kofe Annan.
National Weather Service is a Sponsor of CoCoRaHS

CoCoRaHS is a grassroots volunteer network of backyard weather observers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow) in their local communities. By using low-cost measurement tools, stressing training and education, and utilizing an interactive Web-site, our aim is to provide the highest quality data for natural resource, education and research applications. The only requirements to join are an Enthusiasm for watching and reporting weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather can effect and impact our lives.

The CoCoRaHS web page provides the ability for our observers to see their observations mapped out in "real time", as well as providing a wealth of information for our data users.

For more information, http://www.cocorahs.org/

If you would like to sign-up as a volunteer observer and become part of our expanding network: http://www.cocorahs.org/Application.aspx and join the CoCoRaHS network!

Complimentary training is provided to help you become an effective weather observer. Please check out your state page above (by clicking on your state) for a list of current training sessions in your local area. If none are taking place at the current time, watch our "Training Slide Show" and read our on-line training manual.

Campus EOC Progress Continues

This last March, the UW’s new disaster command center (or the “EOC”) took yet another major step forward when the project formally transitioned from the pre-design to the “Design Stage.” This next step in the multi-state process involves the detailed architectural, engineering and permitting activities. As reported earlier, the UW will soon have a dedicated facility to support its disaster planning, training, response and recovery efforts. Located in the 1st floor SW corner of the UW Tower’s C building, this new facility will provide an significant enhancement to the current limited capabilities provided separately in both Gerberding Hall and the Bryant Building. A pending FEMA grant will greatly improve the communications and technical capabilities of the new EOC. Other significant improvements also include additional shared conference room space, audio-visual enhancements, the co-location of the UWEM staff offices immediately adjacent to the EOC and, most importantly, a facility that will withstand a moderate earthquake. UWEM staff continue to work closely with the project design team, Capitol Projects, and our soon-to-be neighbors (CISO, Upper Campus HR, HR Benefits and Payroll) whom we will share common spaces.