

## We are preparing for disaster; are you?

It is also important that every individual has an emergency plan in place to prepare for any emergency or disaster. Below are some things you can do to be prepared:

- know your designated Emergency Alert System radio and television stations (In King and Kitsap Counties listen to KIRO AM 710 or watch KIRO 7 TV) and follow emergency instructions
- learn about your community's disaster warning signals, what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them
- familiarize yourself with your city or county's emergency action plan
- know your children's school disaster plan
- identify a meeting place for you and your family
- build emergency kits for your home and car
- be prepared to work from home
- out of area contacts

For more information about emergency preparedness, visit:

- [www.seattleredcross.org](http://www.seattleredcross.org)
- [www.3days3ways.org](http://www.3days3ways.org)



Bridge crews regularly inspect the bridge



Strong waves crash along the SR 520 bridge

### For more information:

**Phone:** 206-781-3922

**E-mail:** [SR520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:SR520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov)

**Web site:** [www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR520Bridge)



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Materials can be provided in alternative formats: large print, Braille, cassette tape, or on computer disk for people with disabilities by calling the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 360-705-7097. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact OEO through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1.

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## Preparing for disaster: SR 520 readiness, response, recovery and replacement



SR 520 bridge during a storm in 2006

### WSDOT is ready if the SR 520 bridge is closed

The SR 520 bridge and surrounding roadway could be destroyed during severe windstorms or earthquake. More than 160,000 people rely on SR 520 each day to get to and from work, school and recreational activities. We have witnessed examples of failing infrastructure such as the failure of levees in New Orleans and the collapse of the I-35 West bridge in Minnesota. These events remind us how important it is to be prepared.

We are developing a catastrophic failure plan to respond and replace the aging SR 520 bridge and structures if an earthquake or windstorm permanently close the corridor. The plan will build on existing emergency response procedures and include communications, traffic management, and bridge replacement strategies.

### Working together to keep the region moving

To prepare for a possible catastrophic failure of SR 520, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in collaboration with regional jurisdictions and agencies, has developed a catastrophic failure plan. In the event of a catastrophic failure, this plan will support emergency response, bridge recovery and bridge restoration efforts through development, communications, traffic management, coordination and dissemination of emergency public information.

The process for putting the catastrophic failure plan in place includes:

- developing a preliminary catastrophic failure plan (Completed in 2006)
- working with local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and emergency responders to refine the plan
- testing the draft catastrophic failure plan exercise and seeking public comment
- finalizing the plan

A draft plan will be available for public review and will be finished in late spring 2008

## Windstorm response plans are in place

We want to keep you informed so that you and your family will be able to get where you need to go.

We have emergency response plans in place when we close the SR 520 bridge during a windstorm. In the event of a closure, we coordinate with state and regional emergency operations centers to ensure information gets to the public in a timely manner. We regularly participate in state-level emergency response exercises to ensure we remain prepared.

We are able to predict when windstorms are coming and whether we will need to close the SR 520 bridge. This means we can begin implementing our emergency response plans before the corridor is closed.

### What systems are in place to predict and warn of a severe windstorm?

- commercial television stations, radio, online weather sites
- National Weather Service
- SR 520 bridge and I-90 bridge automated wind and weather sensors
- water sensors in the bridge detect water levels in each pontoon

### What does WSDOT do before a windstorm?

Bridge maintenance crews begin prestorm structural inspections. WSDOT also collaborates with the Washington State Patrol to review and agree on roles, responsibilities, procedures, and communications protocols.

### What happens during a windstorm?

- bridge crews monitor weather, bridge structure, and inspect the bridge drawspan
- WSDOT's traffic management center in Shoreline monitors traffic and storm conditions and receives regular updates from bridge crews



WSDOT's traffic management center in Shoreline

### What about earthquakes?

Earthquakes are unpredictable, but we are ready if damage forces us to close SR 520. After an earthquake, our emergency operations center is established once building conditions are safe. We will primarily assist with SR 520 traffic management and bridge structural inspections.



SR 520 bridge closed for inspection

## When and why do we close the SR 520 bridge to traffic?

### We close the bridge to traffic if:

- north or south winds reach and maintain an average speed of 50 mph for 15 minutes
- a bridge maintenance officer determines the bridge is unsafe for bridge crew, the public, or if there is a high risk of structural damage to the bridge regardless of windspeed
- Washington State Patrol determines it is unsafe for travelers

- WSDOT emergency operations center is activated if there is a long-term closure

### How will I be notified the SR 520 bridge is closed?

The following methods will be used to keep you informed:

- WSDOT Web site
- highway message signs
- media
- 511 travel info line
- highway advisory radio

### What happens once the bridge is closed?

- We immediately notify the public of an emergency bridge closure
- WSDOT traffic management plans are activated
- WSDOT traffic management center monitors traffic and implements traffic management strategies as necessary

## SR 520 could be damaged or destroyed during an earthquake or windstorm

Hollow columns that support the approaches on the bridge could be damaged or destroyed during an earthquake. In addition, the floating bridge pontoons are cracked and leaking from past storm damage. We have made several safety and maintenance improvements to the bridge such

as sealing and reinforcing the leaking pontoons but these repairs do not provide the same long-term benefits of a new, stronger bridge. A severe windstorm could break apart and destroy the floating bridge.

