

ALL HAZARD ALERT BROADCAST SYSTEMS (AHAB)

Grays Harbor County currently has 14 warning sirens which are located in Pacific Beach, Copalis Beach, Ocean City, Ocean Shores, Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Westport and Grayland. With both state and federal assistance provided in 2008, that number should increase to 16 sirens throughout the County. These additional sirens will be placed in Moclips and Aberdeen. This is a good start for Grays Harbor County but additional funding is needed to provide complete coverage to all inundation areas. Local, State and Federal officials continue to work toward that goal.

What is AHAB?

The All Hazard Alert Broadcast system is a single unit or network of warning sirens strategically placed to warn those who are outside or who are in close proximity to a siren. The sirens are placed on the top of a pole which looks much like any other utility pole.



AHAB is a supplemental warning system. It may not always be heard inside homes or businesses or when people are sleeping. It has a range anywhere from 1-1.5 miles depending on many different conditions. AHAB is only one component in the County's warning system. Other warning elements include: NOAA Weather Radios, the Emergency Alert System on radio and TV, the Telephonic Warning System, loudspeakers and sirens.

Since this is an All Hazard Alert, the siren may be activated for an impending disaster, like a distant tsunami, or it may be activated for a hazardous material incident providing instructions to shelter-in-place.

How does AHAB activate?

The AHAB units are operated by remote control through computer systems at the Washington State Emergency Operations Center and by the Grays Harbor County 911 Center. Both locations are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have immediate access to emergency information as it arrives. In the event of a tsunami warning, the State Emergency Operations Center would activate the AHABs in order to provide us with as much warning as possible. Other events would cause local County and City officials to activate through 911.

What should I do when I hear the siren?

If it is the first Monday of the month at noon, know that emergency personnel are testing the siren to ensure that it is working properly and to train others on how to activate it. This testing is routine and necessary. Please do NOT call 911.

If you hear the siren at any other time, **be calm**. Listen to the message being sent after the alarm. If the message is unclear, go somewhere you can listen to local radio to obtain information. Follow the instructions being provided by local officials. **DO NOT CALL 911 UNLESS YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.**

Continue to listen to local radio and instructions from emergency personnel. Follow the recommendations provided. **Be calm.** Help your neighbors. Wait for an “All Clear” message before returning to low lying areas or exiting your shelter.

What should I do to prepare for an AHAB activation?

Thinking about and planning for this possibility will help during a crisis. Consider the following:

- Have a plan. Talk to your family about the routes to high ground from work, school and shopping. Have copies of evacuation maps in your disaster kits. Decide on a meeting place in case you and your family are separated. Have an out-of-area contact.
- Maintain a 3-day disaster supply kit for each person and pet.
- Make sure your vehicle has a half tank of gas at all times.
- Keep your cell phone charged and ready for use at all times. Enter the phone number of your emergency contact under ICE – in case of emergency. Keep a wired telephone at home. Wireless handsets will not work if there is a power outage.
- Try to keep some cash on hand. ATMs and credit cards may not be usable.
- Remain alert to severe weather and possible watches and warnings. Be prepared with sufficient non-perishable food, flashlights and batteries, blankets and personal hygiene items.

