

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POINTER

ADA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

May 2016

Landslides Can Happen Here

Landslides occur every year in Idaho. They can cause severe damage to property, transportation, and wildlife habitats. Gravity is the biggest catalyst in triggering a landslide. When soil is not able to sustain gravitational stress, slopes on mountains and hillsides fail. Many times the increase of stress is caused by other factors that weaken the slope. In Idaho, most landslides occur after intense storms. Earthquakes, heavy rain, and prolonged rainfall on a heavy snow pack can trigger landslides. Burn scars on slopes from wildfires in combination with heavy precipitation create a particularly dangerous hazard. The 2015 wildfire season burned almost 740,000 acres which increases the risk of landslides in Idaho. The lack of vegetation holding the soil together on burn scar slopes are more susceptible to failing during intense storms. Understanding your risk is the first step in being better prepared for a landslide event.

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Learning what to watch for before a landslide occurs is one of the best ways to prepare. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) asks you to be aware of these warning signs to better protect yourself from landslide hazards:

- ◁ Doors and windows jam for the first time
- ◁ New cracks in plaster, tile, brick, or foundation
- ◁ Exterior walls, walks, or stairs begin pulling away from the building
- ◁ Water breaks through ground surface
- ◁ Cracks appear on the ground or paved areas
- ◁ Underground utility lines break
- ◁ Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope
- ◁ Fences, walls, utility poles, or trees tilt
- ◁ Faint rumbling, popping, or cracking noises increase in volume

FEMA also has additional information on how to minimize your home hazards and what you should do during a landslide. Visit <https://adacounty.id.gov/Portals/Accem/Doc/PDF/landslide2.pdf>

MITIGATE YOUR LANDSLIDE RISK

Ada County is no stranger to landslide events. The Boise foothills have experienced three separate landslide events in the last 60 years all of which were triggered by flooding. There are mitigation actions you can take to prevent or lessen the chance of an emergency happening. Taking steps now will help reduce the impact of landslides to your home or business in the future.

Some steps to take to mitigate landslides include:

- ◁ Planting ground cover on slopes
- ◁ Installing flexible pipe fittings to prevent gas and water leaks
- ◁ Replant damaged ground to stop erosion and prevent flash flooding
- ◁ Have your property evaluated by a geotechnical expert for advice on corrective actions to reduce the risk of landslides

We also encourage you to create a family disaster plan and have a 72-hour kit for each member of your household. For more information about landslide safety, visit <https://adacounty.id.gov/accem/How-to-Prepare-Resources/Volcano-and-Landslide>

