

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

On Sunday, East Jefferson Fire Rescue was dispatched to reports of an explosion and fire aboard a 50-foot sailboat in Glen Cove, just south of the Port Townsend Paper Mill. The occupants, who had abandoned the vessel, were found floating in a dinghy, and were transported to the fuel dock at Boat Haven, where EJFR paramedics were waiting. Both the occupants had sustained burns to over 20% of their bodies. Two medevac helicopters were requested for the burn victims while Marine 1 arrived at the sailboat and initiated firefighting efforts. Two victims were Medevaced to Harborview Medical Center's Burn Unit.

Also on Sunday, a two-car collision on Highway 101 just east of Happy Valley Road left one person dead and two injured. According to State Patrol, Micah Lacunza, 39, of Port Hadlock was traveling westbound on 101 in a 2004 Chevy Silverado at about 7:12pm on Sunday when he crossed the center line and struck a 2007 Toyota FJ driven by Mathilde Richford, 34, of Lynwood. Following the collision, Lacunza's Silverado came to rest in the eastbound ditch and the Richfords' Toyota came to rest in the westbound ditch. Lacunza, who was not wearing a seat belt, was flown to Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, while Mathilde Richford was flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Richford's passenger, Skylor Richford, 39, was pronounced dead at the scene. Both vehicles were totalled. State Patrol reported that drugs or alcohol appear to have been involved in the collision.

On the national level, a partial government shutdown began Saturday after congressional Democrats and President Donald Trump's team failed to reach a deal on legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through September. Because US lawmakers have left Washington DC for a ten-day break, the shutdown is unlikely to be lifted soon, although negotiations between the White House and Congressional Democrats will continue. While ICE and Border Patrol operations continue unabated, thanks to the provisions of the so-called Big Beautiful Bill of 2025, about 90% of DHS employees are now working without pay, as are the TSA officers who screen passengers and bags at airports across the country. Fortunately, Air Traffic controllers will receive paychecks as usual, reducing the risk of widespread flight cancellations.

Also on the national level, Senator Maria Cantwell has introduced a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Tsunami Warning and Education Act of 2017 for another five years. The bill is designed to develop a comprehensive national readiness strategy for a major Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, to strengthen our nation's tsunami warning systems, and to improve coordination between federal, state, local, and tribal partners. Specific provisions include:

1. Reauthorizing appropriations for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) tsunami programs.
2. Requiring NOAA to evaluate and improve tsunami alert communications, maintain fail-safe tsunami warning capabilities, and conduct annual tsunami warning drills with federal, state, local, and tribal partners.
3. Expanding NOAA's coordination efforts on tsunami warnings, preparedness, and response to include tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations.

4. Directing the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate the nation's emergency preparedness for a Cascadia Subduction Zone event and directing NOAA to implement a strategy to improve tsunami preparedness based on the GAO review.
5. Protecting NOAA's access to seismic data from the Alaska Earthquake Center.
6. And requiring each Tsunami Warning Center to hire a Tsunami Warning Coordinator to coordinate with state, local, and tribal emergency managers.

And finally, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Mobile Community Office will be at the Quilcene Food Bank on highway 101 tomorrow from 11am to 2pm. The DSHS will be offering services such as food benefits (SNAP), EBT cards, cash assistance, and some medical programs along with other services such as eligibility reviews and updating case information.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.