Alaska: Overview

Everything in the main manual and the skill guides applies in Alaska exactly as written. What's different here is the specific hazard profile and the state, local, and legal context around it. This page is the starting point; the other three pages under Alaska go deeper on laws, local resources, and the data behind the risks named here.

The 1964 Good Friday earthquake: the most powerful ever recorded in North America

On March 27, 1964, a magnitude 9.2 earthquake struck Alaska, the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in North America and the second most powerful recorded anywhere since modern seismography began. The shaking lasted four and a half minutes and deformed more than 200,000 square kilometers of terrain. Fifteen people died in the earthquake itself, and 124 more died in the tsunamis it triggered along the Alaska, Oregon, and California coastlines, including a wave that reached 220 feet at Shoup Bay. See the Risks page for the full data.

October 2025 Typhoon Halong remnants: a very recent, still-unfolding disaster

In October 2025, the remnants of Typhoon Halong slammed into Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta with hurricane-force winds and coastal flooding that reached up to 60 miles inland, an area hundreds of miles from the nearest road system. Homes floated off their foundations with families still inside, utility poles snapped, and the storm triggered one of the largest airlift evacuations in Alaska's history. This page treats it as a live, recent event rather than settled history; recovery and even relocation decisions for affected villages were still ongoing as of early 2026. See the Risks page for the full data.

What this means for how you use the rest of this manual

The manual's Tier structure and the skill guides apply without modification, but Alaska adds a structural constraint most of this manual doesn't otherwise address: roughly 60% of Alaska's 285 communities have no state-registered fire department, and many rural communities are reachable only by plane or boat, weather permitting. That means the assumption running through most of this manual, that professional emergency responders will

eventually arrive, holds far less reliably here than almost anywhere else covered on this site. Self-sufficiency and community-level mutual aid aren't just Tier 3-4 aspirations in remote Alaska; they're closer to a baseline necessity.

Sources

- 1964 Good Friday earthquake data: Wikipedia; NOAA NCEI
- October 2025 Typhoon Halong remnant flooding data: NOAA NESDIS; NPR
- Alaska's remote-community emergency infrastructure gaps: Governing

Alaska: Laws & Legal Considerations

Water rights: a dual riparian/appropriative system under one statute

Alaska's 1966 Water Use Act recognizes both riparian and appropriative water rights within a single statutory framework, rather than choosing one doctrine or layering them ad hoc the way some other states covered on this site do.

Concept	How it works in Alaska
Governing law	Alaska Water Use Act (1966)
Recognized doctrines	Both riparian rights (land adjacent to water) and appropriative rights (water for a designated purpose) are recognized under the same act
Priority	Rights are prioritized by the date first put to beneficial use, with senior users getting primary access during a shortage
Process	Apply to the Division of Mining, Land, and Water; a permit may lead to a certificate of appropriation once beneficial use is established and permit conditions are met

Where to find it: the Alaska Division of Mining, Land, and Water (dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/water/rights) administers water rights.

No dedicated rainwater harvesting statute found

Search of Alaska statutes and agency guidance didn't surface a rainwater-harvesting-specific rule distinct from the general water rights framework above. Typical small-scale residential catchment for non-potable use is unlikely to trigger the formal appropriation process, but confirm with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water for anything beyond casual collection, especially for potable use given Alaska's remote water-quality concerns.

Permitless carry since 2003, one of the longest-standing on this site

Alaska has recognized permitless concealed carry since 2003, longer than nearly every other permitless state covered on this site, most of which adopted their laws between 2010 and 2023.

Requirement	Detail
Standard	Permitless carry, concealed or open, for anyone 21+ legally eligible to possess a firearm (Alaska Statute §11.61.220)
Optional permit	Remains available for reciprocity, or to bypass a background check on additional firearm purchases
Notable prohibited locations	K-12 schools and grounds (narrow exceptions), courthouses/courtrooms, childcare facilities, domestic violence/sexual assault shelters, and bars (limited restaurant exceptions)

Sources

- Alaska water rights and the 1966 Water Use Act: Alaska DNR; ISER
- Alaska permitless carry (2003) and prohibited locations: Alien Gear Holsters; Giffords Law Center

Alaska: Local Resources

Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM)

DHS&EM, formed in 2004, protects Alaskans and their property from terrorism and all other hazards and coordinates rapid recovery from disasters statewide.

Where to find it: ready.alaska.gov.

UAF Cooperative Extension: Master Gardener Program

University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service runs the same category of program as every other state covered on this site, with a distinctive exam-first structure.

- **Alaska Master Gardener Program**: trainees must first pass a comprehensive knowledge exam, then complete 40 hours of volunteer service within 12 months to become certified. Maintaining certification afterward requires 20 volunteer hours and 10 hours of continuing education annually.

Where to find it: uaf.edu/ces/garden/mastergardeners.

CERT: a dedicated statewide administrator role

Alaska's CERT program is coordinated through DHS&EM's Outreach Branch, which includes a specifically designated CERT State Administrator role, a level of centralized coordination worth noting given how many other rural, low-population states covered on this site instead rely on a fully county-by-county model.

Centralized coordination, but still a vast geography to cover

Having a single statewide CERT administrator doesn't mean every Alaska community has an active team, especially in the remote, road-inaccessible villages this state's overview page discusses. Residents should still confirm local availability directly with DHS&EM.

Where to find it: ready.alaska.gov/Preparedness/Meet_the_Team.

Sources

- Alaska DHS&EM structure and mission: Wikipedia
- UAF Master Gardener Program requirements: University of Alaska Fairbanks
- Alaska CERT statewide coordination: Alaska DHS&EM

Alaska: Risks & Trends

Same standard as every other page on this site: every figure below is independently sourced, and figures that vary across sources, or measure genuinely different things, are flagged as such rather than collapsed into one number that looks more precise than the underlying data actually supports.

The 1964 Good Friday earthquake

Metric	Figure
Date	March 27, 1964
Magnitude	9.2 (some sources cite 9.2-9.3), the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in North America
Duration of shaking	4 minutes, 38 seconds
Area of tectonic deformation	200,000+ sq km
Deaths, earthquake itself	15
Deaths, resulting tsunamis (AK/OR/CA)	124 (12 in Crescent City, CA alone)
Maximum tsunami run-up	220 ft, Shoup Bay, Alaska
Damage (1964 / 2013-adjusted)	$500 million / ~$3.75 billion

A tsunami risk that reached three states

This earthquake’s death toll wasn’t confined to Alaska: the tsunamis it generated killed people as far away as Crescent City, California. It’s a clear demonstration that a single Pacific-coast seismic event can have consequences hundreds or thousands of miles from the epicenter, not just locally.

October 2025 Typhoon Halong remnant flooding

Metric	Figure
Landfall	October 12, 2025, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Alaska
Flood extent inland	Up to 60 mi
Residents displaced	1,000+
Confirmed deaths	1, with 2 family members still missing at time of reporting
Notable damage	Homes swept off foundations (some occupied at the time), snapped utility poles, uprooted village boardwalks, numerous diesel/oil spills, graves washed away, a year's stockpiled subsistence food (fish, berries) ruined
Evacuation scale	One of the largest airlift evacuations in Alaska history

Still an open, unresolved situation

As of early 2026, affected villages were still weighing whether to relocate entirely rather than rebuild in place. Treat the specific figures above as a snapshot of an ongoing recovery, not a closed historical event, and expect them to be updated as the situation develops further.

Sources

- 1964 Good Friday earthquake data: Wikipedia; NOAA NCEI
- October 2025 Typhoon Halong remnant flooding data: NOAA NESDIS; NPR; Anchorage Daily News