

FLOOD SAFETY - TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!

Floods are the most common natural disaster in the U.S. Knowing the meanings of alert and warning terms is helpful. A **flood watch** means "Be Aware" because conditions are right for flooding to occur in your area. A **flood warning** means "Take Action!" because flooding is either happening or will happen shortly. A **flash flood warning** means flooding is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately. Listen to local officials.

Preparing FOR a flood:

- Pay attention to weather reports on TV, the radio, social media, and smart phones.
- Gather supplies in case you have to leave immediately, or if services are cut off.
- Protect your property. Move valuables to higher levels. Declutter drains and gutters.
- Identify safe locations. Family members that do not live with you should be told where to find you in the event of a flood.

Survive DURING a flood:

- Depending on where you are, and the impact and warning time of flooding, go to the safe location that you previously identified.
- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.
- Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters!
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water, then stay inside. If water is rising inside the vehicle, then seek refuge on the roof.
- If trapped in a building, then go to its highest level. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising floodwater. Go on the roof only if necessary. Once there, signal for help.

Be safe AFTER a flood:

- Listen to authorities for information and instructions. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.
- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Be aware of the risk of electrocution. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off the electricity to prevent electric shock.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of the car.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.