

This preparedness guide explains flooding and flood safety and suggests lifesaving actions YOU can take to protect yourself, your family, your home or your business.

## Flooding is the leading cause of severe weather related deaths.



The Centers for Disease Control report that **over half** of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters.

It only takes 18 inches of water to carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and trucks. If water is above your ankles it can sweep you off your feet. It only takes 6 inches of fast-moving flood water to knock over an adult.

**Flooding causes more damage in the United States than any other severe weather-related event, an average of \$5 billion a year.**

## How Do I Keep Myself and My Family Safe During a Flood?

**Before a flood hits, you can view flood locations in real time at:**  
<http://water.weather.gov/ahps/>

Before the flood reaches your area:

- \* Know if floodwaters might affect your home and property. Know your elevation above flood stage.
- \* Evacuate immediately, if advised to do so. Bring important documents with you.
- \* Move to a safe area before access is cut off.
- \* Do not attempt to cross flowing water.
- \* Monitor a NOAA Weather radio.

During the flood:

- \* Avoid areas subject to flooding.
- \* Never drive through flooded roadways.
- \* Do not drive around barricades, they are there for your protection.
- \* If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately.
- \* Never try to walk through or allow children to play around flood water.



After the Flood:

- \* Do not visit disaster areas, your presence may hamper emergency operations.
- \* Throw out food that has come into contact with the floodwater and boil drinking water before using it.
- \* Stay out of buildings that remain in flood waters.
- \* Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas.
- \* If the power is out, use flashlights to examine buildings. Flammables may be inside.
- \* Report broken utilities to the correct authorities.

## Flood Myth vs. Fact

- Myth:** A 100-year flood only occurs every 100 years.  
**Fact:** The 100-year flood is a climactic average; there is a 1% chance that a 100-year flood will occur in any given year.
- Myth:** Flash floods only occur along flowing streams.  
**Fact:** Flash floods can occur in urban areas where no streams are present.
- Myth:** Flash floods occur mainly in the late afternoon and evening.  
**Fact:** Many flash floods occur at night.
- Myth:** Larger vehicles, such as SUVs and pickup trucks are safe to drive through flood waters.  
**Fact:** Two feet of water can carry away most Vehicles, including SUVs and pickup trucks.



## Flooded Roadway Facts

- ◆ Nearly half of all people killed in floods are those who try driving through flooded areas.
- ◆ Once your vehicle is lifted off the road by high water, it can easily be pushed sideways. Most vehicles will then tend to roll over, trapping those inside.
- ◆ Water can erode the road bed, creating unsafe driving conditions.
- ◆ Underpasses can fill rapidly with water. Driving into a flooded underpass can quickly put you in five to six feet of water.
- ◆ There is no guarantee that the road still exists under the water, or that the roadbed hasn't been undercut by the flood waters, just waiting for a little additional weight to make it collapse.

**IF YOU CANNOT SEE THE BOTTOM OF THE FLOODED SECTION, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CROSS IT!**

# Flood Types

**River Flood:** This type of flood occurs when prolonged rainfall over several days causes a river or stream to overflow and flood the area.

- ◇ Flooding along rivers is a natural process.
- ◇ A normal river flood can last for over a week.

**Urban Flood:** The construction of urban areas increases water runoff by reducing the amount of ground able to absorb rainfall.

- ◇ Densely populated areas have a high risk for flash/urban floods.

**Flash Flood:** Flash floods occur when the ground becomes saturated with water that has fallen too quickly to be absorbed by the ground. They can also occur from a levee failure or from a fast-rising river.

- ◇ Urbanization increases runoff two to six times over what would occur on natural terrain.
- ◇ During times of urban flooding, streets can become swift-moving rivers.
- ◇ Flash floods can destroy buildings, down trees and wash out roads. Significant damage tends to occur in areas next to a body of water or in a low-lying area.
- ◇ A flash flood is not something that takes days to happen, it's a situation that can develop quickly.
- ◇ Flash floods can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall.
- ◇ Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 20 feet or more.



The NWS issues products to convey the magnitude of observed or forecast flooding using flood severity categories. Know the terms used to describe flood threats:

**Warning Products:**

Hydrologic Outlook: A flood event may develop. It provides information to those who need considerable lead time to prepare for the flood.

*“Get Ready!”*

Flood Watch: The expectation of a flood event has increased, but its occurrence, location, and timing is still uncertain. It provides lead time so people can set their preparedness plans in motion.

*“Get Set!”*

Flood Warning: A flood event is occurring, imminent, or has a high probability of occurrence.

*“Go Take Action!”*

**Severity Categories:**

Minor Flooding: Minimal or no damage, but possibly public threat or inconvenience.

Moderate Flooding: Some damage to structures and roads near streams. Some evacuations of people and transfer of property to higher elevations are necessary.

Major Flooding: Extensive damage to structures and roads. Significant evacuations of people and transfer of property to higher elevations.

**Stay Informed!**  
**View the latest flood outlook and subscribe for email alerts at**  
**<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/serfc/>**

**NOAA Weather Radio**

Operating since the 1970’s, NOAA Weather Radio has been “the voice of the National Weather Service,” broadcasting weather information 24 hours a day, every day. This “All Hazards” alert mechanism warns the public of both weather-related and non weather-related dangers.

With a NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radio, you can monitor current weather conditions as well as forecasts for your local area. These radios also have an alert feature which will sound a loud alarm—followed by important weather information—whenever a watch or warning is issued. This particular feature has been credited with saving countless lives. Newer models have the capability to connect accessories such as strobe lights and pillow shakers to the radio. These devices, specifically designed for people with special needs, will activate whenever a warning is issued.

NOAA All-Hazards Weather Radios can be purchased at most electronics stores, hardware stores, retail stores, or online. Prices start at around \$30. Accessories such as strobe lights and pillow shakers are sold separately.



**Flood Safety Rules**

- » Monitor NOAA Weather Radio, or a favorite news source for weather – related information.
- » If flooding occurs, get to higher ground and out of flood prone areas.
- » Avoid areas that are already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast.
- » Never drive through flooded roadways.
- » Do not park your vehicle along rivers or streams, especially during dangerous conditions.

**Flood Safety Awareness Week:**

*The third week of March*

**For additional information on floods and flood safety visit:**

**<http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/>**

**[www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org)**



**A Guide To Flood Safety**

