

# Flooding Safety

## For Rural Communities

### Why Should I Be Concerned About Flooding?

This preparedness guide explains flood-related hazards and suggests lifesaving actions you can take. With this information you can recognize flooding potential, develop a plan, and be ready when threatening weather approaches. Remember...your safety is up to YOU!

On average, floods (especially flash floods) kill more people in the United States than other types of severe weather. Flash floods are the most dangerous kind of floods, because they **combine the destructive power of a flood with incredible speed**. Flash floods occur when heavy rainfall exceeds the ability of the ground to absorb it, even in locations that normally don't experience regular river flooding. They can also develop rapidly, in minutes, and may occur in locations downstream from where the actual rainfall occurred. Valley locations are especially susceptible, as mountains and steep hills produce rapid runoff into the valleys, which causes streams to rise quickly. Floods can roll boulders the size of cars, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and pose a significant threat to human lives.

**Flood Watch (Be Prepared):** A Flood Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for flooding. It does not mean flooding will occur, but if rains continue, it is possible.

**Flood Advisory (Be Aware):** Advisories are issued for conditions that could cause a significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.

**Flood Warning (Take Action!):** A Flood Warning is issued when flooding is imminent or already occurring, usually issued for rivers as they rise out of their banks and are expected to flood surrounding areas.

**Flash Flood Warning (Take Action!):** A Flash Flood Warning is issued when a flash flood is imminent or occurring. If you are in a flood prone area (in a valley and/or near a creek/stream that is rising) move immediately to higher ground.

### Warning Signs

Warning signs (yellow) are permanent signs alerting drivers to existing or potentially hazardous road conditions. The Turn Around Don't Drown (TADD) warning signs are used in locations where the risk for flooding is high, flooding happens very quickly, and/or where flooding occurs in isolated locations harder for emergency officials to reach.



### Barricades

If flooding has been reported on a road, making travel hazardous, emergency officials or road departments may close the road on either side of the flooding. They can do this either by parking emergency vehicles to block people from getting through, or by putting up barricades. If barricades are in place, do NOT attempt to drive around them, even if authorities are not present. You could be putting yourself in danger!



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### BEFORE A FLOOD:

- ✓ **Have a Communication Plan...** Whether it is having a specific person identified to contact for status updates, or a safe location to meet up with family members, having a plan in place will give you peace of mind if disaster does strike.
- ✓ **Assemble an Emergency Kit...** It is good practice to have enough food, water and medicine on hand at all times to last you at least 3 days in the case of an emergency. You should also have blankets, a light source, first aid kit, rubber boots, rubber gloves, and a NOAA Weather Radio.
- ✓ **Know Your Risk...** Is your home, business or school in a floodplain? Where is water likely to collect on the roadways you most often travel? What is the fastest way to get to higher ground? Knowing the answers to these questions ahead of time can save your life.
- ✓ **Prepare Your Home...** Oftentimes flash floods can occur within minutes and sometimes without any sign of rain. Being prepared can save your life and give you peace of mind.
- ✓ **Prepare and Leave...** You may be evacuated, so pack in advance. Don't wait until the last moment to gather the essentials for yourself, your family and/or your pets.

### DURING A FLOOD:

- ✓ **Stay Informed...** Keep a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio for the most up-to-date information.
- ✓ **Get to Higher Ground...** If you live in a flood prone area or are camping in a low lying area, get to higher ground immediately.
- ✓ **Obey Evacuation Orders...** If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Lock your home when you leave.
- ✓ **Practice Electrical Safety...** If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping or popping noises--stay away! Do not drive over/under loose electrical wires. Stay out of water that may have electricity in it!

- ✓ **Avoid Flood Waters...** Don't walk through flood waters. It only takes 6 inches of moving water to knock you off your feet. If you are trapped by moving water, move to the highest possible point. Do NOT travel into flooded roadways or around a barricade; Turn Around, Don't Drown! Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide hazards such as sharp objects, washed out road surfaces, electrical wires, chemicals, etc.

### AFTER A FLOOD:

- ✓ **Stay Informed...** Ensure water is safe to drink, cook or clean with after a flood. Authorities may ask you to boil water for a while after a flood.
- ✓ **Avoid Flood Waters...** Standing water hides many dangers including toxins and chemicals. There may be sharp objects under the water or the road could have collapsed.
- ✓ **Heed Road Closures...** They are put in place for your safety, so don't try to cross a closed road!
- ✓ **Wait for the All Clear...** Do not enter a flood damaged home or building until you're given the All Clear by authorities. Water can cause walls to collapse, ceilings to fall, toxic molds, etc.
- ✓ **Contact Your Family and Loved Ones...** Let your family and close friends know that you're okay!



Courtesy of Bath County, KY EMA

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