



MSU-ES Dawg Tracks

April, 2012



Flood Survival Tips



Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States. Not all floods are alike. Some develop slowly while some others happen very quickly. Flash flooding can happen in a matter of minutes with very little traces of rain activity. They can impact a small community or area, but at the same time they can impact a large area like a town or a basin area. Floods can carry large quantities of mud, debris, quantities of chemicals, gasoline, oil, and raw sewage, just depending what is in the path of the flowing water.

So, it behooves us to prepare for flooding, in case it becomes a reality. No one wants to go through a flood or wish this upon anyone else, but they do happen.

PRE-PREPARATION FOR FLOOD PROTECTION-

- Avoid building in a flood plain, if possible. If not, you should strongly consider buying flood insurance and elevate and reinforce the home.
- Consider elevating the HVAC, electric panels, etc. for protection from flood waters.
- Consider constructing outside barriers for rising water protection.
- Develop an emergency kit with required medicines, non-perishable foods and sufficient bottled water to cover the family for several days. Also, develop an evacuation and communication plan, orienting the family with its contents.

FLOOD SURVIVAL TIPS-

- ✓ Listen to the radio and television for weather information.
- ✓ If a flash flood is a possibility, move to higher ground and do not wait for instructions to move. Be aware of rivers, streams, drainage channels and other areas known to flood easily. Flash floods can occur with very little warning, such as rain clouds or heavy rain.
- ✓ Before leaving the home cut off the utilities, close open valves and disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you're wet or standing in water.
- ✓ Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- ✓ After the flood avoid floodwaters. The floodwater could be contaminated with oil, gasoline, raw sewage and other substances.
- ✓ Water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines. Stay away from down power lines and report them to the utility company.
- ✓ Stay out of buildings that are surrounded by floodwaters. Use caution when entering buildings. The foundation could have hidden damage.

- ✓ Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, or pits as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are a serious hazard.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwaters can contain chemicals, sewage, etc.

FLOOD HAZARD TERMS-

If you aren't familiar with the various flood hazard terminology, it will be to your advantage to get familiar with them. Following we will discuss each one:

- **Flood Watch** - Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA weather radio, commercial radio, or television to stay abreast of conditions.
- **Flash Flood Watch** - Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground. Again, listen to the weather radio, commercial and the television to stay abreast of conditions.
- **Flood Warning** - Flooding is occurring or will occur soon. Be prepared to evacuate. If so, move out quickly.
- **Flash Flood Warning** - A flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground on foot immediately.

TIPS FOR DRIVING IN FLOOD CONDITIONS-

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float most vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry most vehicles away including sport utility vehicles and pickups.
- Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The water depth is not always obvious. The roadbed could be washed out under the water and you could be stranded or trapped.
- Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for a purpose-your protection!
- Do not attempt shortcuts. They may be blocked. Follow the evacuation routes.
- Be especially cautious at night - it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

Although we do have small, intermittent flooding, we haven't had to experience the large scale ones that have occurred in the last couple of years over on the west side of Mississippi. It doesn't mean that we won't experience one sometime in the future; so it will behoove us to have a plan and be prepared in case of a flood.

Ted Gordon - Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.

MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201

Excerpts: www.ready.gov/floods

1/19/2012