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PRESS RELEASE

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PLAN AHEAD TO SAVE LIVES, REDUCE DAMAGE

Flash floods can occur just about anywhere, so taking time to plan ahead may save a life and can help reduce damage to property.

Because flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States (www.ready.gov/floods), it's wise to understand the potential for flooding in your area and have a plan to evacuate your location if flooding occurs.

Know your risk for floods and learn about mitigation planning and strategies by visiting FEMA's (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Flood Map Service Center at <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps>. Be aware that flood risk can change over time due to new building and development, weather patterns, and other factors. FEMA works with federal, state, tribal, and local partners across the nation to identify flood risk and promote informed planning and development practices.

Well before a flood occurs, take time to answer some flood-related questions:

1. How will I receive emergency alerts and warnings?
2. What is my shelter plan?
3. What is my evacuation route?
4. What is my family/household communication plan?
5. Do I need to update my emergency preparedness kit?

An emergency preparedness kit should include all that's needed to survive on your own for several days. That includes having water, food, and any other necessities that would meet your

needs for surviving for several days. The kit should also include any necessary medical supplies for family members.

Keep the kit in a designated location and have it ready in the event that you must leave your house quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is stored. Maintain the kit and replace any expired items as necessary. On an annual basis, review kit materials and update the kit as family needs change.

Among the list of basic supplies are:

1. Water – one gallon per person per day for several days for drinking and sanitation.
2. Non-perishable food for several days.
3. Battery-powered or hand crank radio and NOAA weather radio with tone alert.
4. Flashlight.
5. First aid kit.
6. Extra batteries.
7. Whistle (to signal for help).
8. Dust mask to help filter contaminated air.
9. Plastic sheeting and duct tape to assist in sheltering in place.
10. Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties.
11. Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities).
12. Manual can opener for food.
13. Local maps.
14. Cell phone with chargers and battery backup.

For a complete list of recommended emergency supplies, visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit>.

Floodwaters result from a variety of sources, including rain, snow, storms, and overflows of dams and other water systems. Flooding conditions may develop slowly or suddenly and sometimes occur without warning. Among the dangers floodwaters pose are power outages, transportation disruptions, building damage, landslides, etc.

In the event that a flood warning is issued for your area, the steps to staying safe include:

1. Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS), NOAA Weather Radio or local alerting systems for current flood related emergency information and instructions.
2. If an evacuation order is issued, seek safe shelter as soon as possible.
3. If leaving your location isn't feasible, move to the highest ground/floor.
4. If you're driving to a safe shelter, stay off bridges if fast-moving water is going underneath them. These waters can wash a bridge away without warning.
5. Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwaters.
6. Never drive around barricades, which are intended to keep traffic out of flooded areas.
7. Keep in mind that a mere six inches of moving water can knock an adult down, and one foot of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.
8. If your vehicle is swept away by flood water, stay inside the car unless water begins to fill the vehicle. In that case, get on the roof of the car.
9. If you're trapped inside a building, get to the highest floor or on the roof. Once you're on the roof, begin signaling for help. Don't climb into a closed attic to avoid getting trapped by rising water.
10. If you are sick and require medical attention, contact your health care provider for instructions and shelter in place if possible. In a medical emergency situation, call 9-1-1.

Once floodwaters begin to recede, continue to listen to EAS, NOAA weather radio or local alerting systems for updates on flooding conditions. Heed all instructions from local authorities, only returning home once authorities say it is safe.

Even as flooding conditions improve, avoid driving except in emergencies.

When it's time for cleaning up, wear heavy work gloves, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as an N95 mask, goggles, long sleeve tops and long pants, and rubber boots or heavy boots. Check with local sources regarding the appropriate respiratory equipment to use when cleaning up mold or other debris.

Anyone with asthma or other lung conditions and/or immune suppression should not enter buildings where indoor water leaks or mold are present or can be detected by odor. Children should not participate in disaster cleanup activities.

Once a building has been flooded, be mindful that snakes and other animals may be inside.

Be aware that floodwaters pose the risk of electrocution. Anytime you're standing in water, do not touch electrical equipment. If the equipment is wet, do not touch it before turning off the main power source.

Avoid wading in floodwater whenever possible. The water can be contaminated and may be covering dangerous debris. It's also possible that underground or downed power lines are electrically charging the water.

Whenever using a gas-powered generator or other gasoline-powered equipment as part of the cleanup, use the equipment **ONLY** outdoors and away from windows.

Never assume a flood can't occur in your location. Be aware of local alerts and warnings and take every possible step to remain safe during a flooding event.

Source: www.ready.gov/floods

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