

Flood Safety Toolkit

The Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)), the [Ready Campaign](#), and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) are teaming up again to highlight the importance of flood safety awareness this late winter and spring.

[According to NOAA](#), the United States saw its 5th warmest year on record in 2020. It also had a record number of billion-dollar disasters ever. The [National Weather Service \(NWS\)](#) found that 57 people died in floods in the United States in 2020, of which 37 of these individuals were driving at the time of the event.

Our goal here is not to be alarmist; our goal is to make readers aware so they can take steps to be prepared. We ask that this early spring, you promote the importance of understanding your risk, taking action, and being an example of how to be prepared and resilient.

In addition to asking Americans to learn their risks and take action to prepare through its own outreach channels, [FEMA Region 3](#) is encouraging everyone to get the word out and help the [Whole Community](#) prepare for flooding. This toolkit is designed to provide you and your organization with easy to use tools to promote this campaign and help your stakeholders be better prepared for disasters.

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Flood Safety

Key Messages for Flood Safety

- **Be Aware of Floods:** Flooding is a nationwide threat to the United States and its territories throughout the year. It's important for everyone to understand their risk, take action to prepare, and be an example.
 - Driving through flooded roads is dangerous! Turn Around, Don't Drown!
- **Know Your Risk:** Flooding can occur anywhere it rains! Be aware of your neighborhood's [flood map](#) to understand what areas may be most likely to flood. The first step to being prepared is to understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect where you live and work, and how the weather could impact you and your loved ones.
- **Take Action:** Make an evacuation plan in case of floods, build an emergency kit or update your existing kit, inventory and keep important papers and valuables in a safe place, and get involved in helping others prepare. You can begin by visiting [Community.fema.gov](https://www.community.fema.gov). Prevent damage to your home before it happens, by mitigating your flood risk, and purchase flood insurance to make sure you are covered.
- **Be an example where you live:** Be a helpful influence on your community by sharing your weather preparedness story. Be a Force of Nature by letting your friends and family know what you did to become weather-ready and the steps they can take to do the same.

Talking Points for Flood Safety

Flood Awareness

- Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States but not all floods are alike. Some floods develop slowly, while others, such as flash floods, can develop in just a few minutes and without visible signs of rain.
- Flash floods can occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, a dam or levee failure or a sudden release of water held by an ice jam.
- Overland flooding, the most common type of flooding event, typically occurs when waterways such as rivers or streams overflow their banks as a result of rainwater or a possible levee breach and cause flooding in surrounding areas. It can also occur when rainfall or snowmelt exceeds the capacity of underground pipes, or streets and drains designed to carry flood water away from urban areas.

- Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live or work, but especially if you are in low-lying areas, near water, behind a levee, or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that appear harmless in dry weather can flood.
- In direct response to so many unnecessary vehicle-related flood deaths, the National Weather Service (NWS) developed a national campaign called “*Turn Around Don’t Drown.*” The campaign aims to educate motorists of the dangers of driving across flooded roads. To learn more about the campaign and promotional tools, please visit <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood-turn-around-dont-drown>.
- Know the terms to help understand flood hazards:
 - Flood Watch - Flooding is possible; tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
 - Flash Flood Watch - Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
 - Flood Warning - Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
 - Flash Flood Warning - A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

Know Your Risk

- The first step to becoming weather-ready is to understand the type of hazardous weather that can affect where you live and work, and how the weather could impact you and your loved ones.
- Areas more susceptible to flooding are low-lying areas, near water, behind a levee, or downstream from a dam. Even small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that appear harmless in dry weather can flood.
 - However, even areas that aren’t at regular risk for flooding can flood. In fact, 20% of flood insurance claims come from properties located outside of high-risk flood zones.
- To learn more about flood risk:
 - Visit [Ready.gov/floods](https://www.ready.gov/floods) to learn more about flooding.
 - Use FEMA’s flood mapping service at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home> to understand the flood risk in your area.
 - Visit [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn about the National Flood Insurance Program.
 - Follow [@FEMAreion3](https://twitter.com/FEMAreion3) on Twitter.
 - Follow FEMA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/fema) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/fema).
 - Follow the National Weather Service on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/nws) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/nws).

Take Action

- [Make a plan](#), [be prepared](#), and [help others](#) do the same.
- Sign up for [emergency alerts](#).
- To prepare for, and protect against, a flood, you should:
 - Build an [emergency kit](#).
 - Make a [family communications plan](#).
 - Avoid building in a [floodplain](#) unless you [elevate](#) and [reinforce your home](#).
 - Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
 - Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
 - If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Make an [Emergency Plan](#)
 - Identify three places to meet family and friends in the event of an emergency. One in your neighborhood, one in your town, and one out of town. Make sure that all locations are in higher elevation and offer protection from the elements.
 - Learn how you will get to your out of town location; determine your evacuation routes.
 - Write down information on important locations like workplaces, schools, daycares, houses of worship, doctor's offices, hospitals, etc.
 - Make sure you take into account everyone's needs, such as any medical concerns, communications, etc. Don't forget to include your pets in your plan as well.
 - Know how you will learn important information after a disaster (radio, warning sirens, reverse 911, etc.).
 - Share contact information with everyone (friends, family and out of town contacts).
- Know what to do [during floods](#).
 - Listen to the radio, television, or your Weather Radio for information.
 - If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
 - If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:
 - Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
 - Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
 - When you evacuate, 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.

- If you're driving;
 - Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
 - Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
 - A foot of water can cause vehicles to float.
 - Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including SUVs and pick-ups.
 - If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground, where water is not moving or is not more than a few inches deep. You and the vehicle can be swept away quickly. If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water get out quickly and seek refuge on the roof.
 - Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection. Turn around and go another way.
 - Do not try to take short cuts. They may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes.
 - Be especially cautious driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
 - Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks, particularly during threatening conditions.

Be An Example

- Be a helpful influence in your community by sharing your weather preparedness story. [Be a Force of Nature](#) by letting your friends and family know what you did to become flood-ready and the steps they can take to do the same.
- Studies show that individuals need to receive messages a number of ways before taking appropriate action.
- Most people are more likely to act when the messages they receive are from a trusted source like family, friends, or a community leader.
- Share the actions you've taken to be prepared with your family and friends by posting your story on your social media site.
- Tweet that you're prepared with the hashtag **#ImAForce #FloodSafety, #SevereWxPrep #R3Ready, #SpringSafety, and #pr3pared.**
- Have an emergency plan and know what to do before a disaster strikes. Post your plan in your home or business where others can see it.

News Release Template

<ORGANIZATION> Supports Flood Preparedness

<CITY, St.> – **<INSERT ORGANIZATION>** will be supporting [Flood Safety Awareness](#) and encouraging all to know your risk, take action, and be an example where you live. **<INSERT ORGANIZATION>** is **<INSERT EVENT INFORMATION HERE>** or **<committed to supporting flood preparedness in the community>**.

Flooding is a nationwide threat to the United States and its territories throughout the year. However not all floods are alike. Some floods develop slowly, while others, such as flash floods, can develop in just a few minutes and without visible signs of rain. Additionally, floods can be local, impacting a neighborhood or community, or very large, affecting entire river basins and multiple states.

Everyone should be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live or work, but especially if you are in low-lying areas, near water, behind a levee or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that appear harmless in dry weather can flood.

<ORGANIZATION>, alongside the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([FEMA](#)), and the [Ready Campaign](#) will be encouraging **<EMPLOYEES OR RESIDENTS>** to take action against flooding by:

- Building an emergency kit and making a family communications plan.
- Elevating the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- Holding a discussion, drill, or exercise.

QUOTE FROM LEADERSHIP TO SUPPORT THE FLOOD PREPAREDNESS CAMPAIGN

More information can be found at **<INSERT ORGANIZATION WEBSITE or [Ready.gov](#)>**. Information on the different types of hazards is available at [Ready.gov](#) or the Spanish-language web site [Listo.gov](#).

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Online Resources

Browse the links below for additional information on flood safety and preparedness:

- [Ready.gov/Floods](#)
- [The National Flood Insurance Program](#)
- [Mitigation Best Practices Portfolio](#)
- [Preparing for an Emergency Video Series](#)
- [Public Service Announcements](#)
- [FloodSmart Social Media Library](#)
- [Cost of Flooding Tool](#)
- [NWS Preparing for Hazardous Weather](#)
- [Turn Around, Don't Drown](#)
- Public Service Announcements on Flood Safety from the NWS:
 - [Turn Around, Don't Drown](#)
 - [Flood Safety Wireless Emergency Alerts](#)
 - [Hazardous Arroyos](#)
 - [Know Your Caves](#)
 - [Power of Moving Water](#)
 - [Storm Drains](#)
 - [Water Safety in Canyons](#)
 - [White Water Rafting Safety](#)

To promote Flood Safety Awareness, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) has developed training programs to encourage flood safety:

- For the whole community: [IS-909: Community Preparedness: Implementing Simple Ideas for Everyone](#)
- For architects and Engineers: [IS-279.A: Introduction to Retrofitting Flood-Prone Residential Buildings](#)
- For Floodplain Administrators, Building Code Officials, Building Inspectors, State NFIP Coordinators, etc.: [E0273: Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program](#)

FEMA has developed these resources to educate and inform communities about the importance of flood safety awareness.

- [Snowmelt & Spring Flooding Campaign](#)
- [Post-Wildfire Flooding Risk](#)
- [Protect Your Home from Flooding: Low-Cost Projects You Can Do Yourself](#)
- [Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your House from Flooding](#)
- [Above the Flood: Elevating Your Floodprone House](#)

- [Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage](#)

Social Media

Social Media for Flood Safety

Hashtags:

#Floodready

#Floodsmart

#ImAForce

#FloodSafety

#SevereWxPrep

#R3Ready

#SpringSafety

#pr3pared

- Prepare before a #flood by installing a water alarm in your basement. More tips: <https://www.ready.gov/floods> #floodsafety
- Spread #flood awareness in your community with these creative promotional tools! <https://www.ready.gov/flood-toolkit> #floodsafety
- Flooding is an increased risk if you live close to sea level! Know your risk and prepare! #floodsafety
- #TriviaTuesday: Anywhere it rains, it can flood. To be prepared, it's important to be ready to evacuate quickly. #floodsafety
- How experienced are you in a flood situation? #CERT performs drills to ready the community! Read more at <https://www.ready.gov/cert>
- When people talk about preparedness, they are more likely to take action, so start the conversation! #floodsafety
- #Flood losses are not typically covered under renter and homeowners insurance policies. Consider flood insurance. <http://floodsmart.gov>
- Find out if your home or business is at risk for #flood and educate yourself on the impact it could have. [FloodSmart | The National Flood Insurance Program](#)

- There is a 30-day waiting period before #flood insurance goes into effect, so consider purchasing it now. [FloodSmart | The National Flood Insurance Program](#)
- Reduce the impact of #flooding; elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home. <http://Ready.gov/floods>
- Consider installing "check valves" to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home. <http://Ready.gov/floods>
- Flood fact: 2 feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including SUV's and pick-ups. <http://Ready.gov/floods>
- Flood fact: 6 inches of water will reach the bottom of most cars causing loss of control & possible stalling. <http://Ready.gov/floods>
- Learning flood hazard terms will help you recognize and prepare for a flood. <http://Ready.gov/floods>
- Driving into floodwaters could be the last decision you ever make. <http://youtu.be/el6mllHKrVY> #FloodSafety
- 1 out of every 2 flood fatalities is vehicle-related. Turn Around, Don't Drown. <http://youtu.be/el6mllHKrVY> #FloodSafety
- It is impossible to know how deep water is just by looking at it. <http://youtu.be/el6mllHKrVY>#FloodSafety
- Go to <http://water.weather.gov/ahps/> to find out if rivers near you are flooding #FloodSafety
- Flood Fact: Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. #floodsafety
- Talk with your kids about #SevereWxPrep. Know the facts: <https://www.ready.gov/severe-weather>
- Make a plan to connect during severe weather by text, e-mail, social media & cell. #SevereWxPrep, #R3Ready.
- #SevereWxPrep tips: Only travel if necessary, keep phones charged, check on neighbors, & bring pets indoors.
- Pack an emergency kit for each person and pet traveling in your car in case evacuations are ordered: ready.gov/car #SevereWxPrep

- 30: The number of days it takes for flood insurance to begin. Don't wait until it's too late! <https://www.floodsmart.gov/how/how-do-i-buy-flood-insurance> #FloodSafety
- Only flood insurance will cover the damage from floods. Speak with your insurance agent to learn more. #FloodSafety <https://www.floodsmart.gov/how/how-do-i-buy-flood-insurance>
- An inch of water could cost more than \$25,000 in repairs & replacement of personal possessions. #FloodSafety <https://www.floodsmart.gov/how/how-do-i-buy-flood-insurance>
- Prepare for a flood today by reviewing your property & flood insurance policies. #FloodSafety <https://www.floodsmart.gov/how/how-do-i-buy-flood-insurance>
- Snap some pictures of your property & do an inventory. This will be handy if flood waters damage your property. #FloodSafety
- Flood waters can damage important papers. Store critical docs in a waterproof container or electronically. #FloodSafety
- Before a flood: reduce potential property damage by elevating utilities & installing sewer backflow valves. #FloodSafety
- Prepare before a [#flood](#) by installing a water alarm in your basement. More tips: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood/first-prepare-for-flooding> #FloodSafety
- Before a flood: reduce potential property damage by using flood damage resistant materials. #FloodSafety
- Whether it's a few inches or a mile high, flood insurance covers you for the unexpected: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/how/how-do-i-buy-flood-insurance> #FloodSafety
- Are you floodsmart? Learn about the National Flood Insurance Program and prepare today: <https://www.floodsmart.gov> #FloodSafety
- This month, leap into a stronger financial future with #FloodInsurance. Call your insurance agent or learn more at [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov). #LeapYear #FloodSafety
- Don't let an ice jam stick you with a bill. Visit [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn how to protect your home from flooding. #FloodSmart #NFIP #IceJam #floodinsurance
- Spring thaws break river ice into chunks that can get jammed, increasing the risk of flooding. Visit [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) to learn how to protect your home. #FloodSmart #NFIP

#IceJam #floodinsurance

- Make sure you and your family are protected from unexpected ice jams this season by purchasing a flood insurance policy from the National Flood Insurance Program. #FloodSmart #NFIP #IceJam #floodinsurance
- Don't let flooding put you in a jam. Get flood insurance. Visit FloodSmart.gov to learn how to protect your home from flooding. Flood insurance is available to everyone, even if you're outside the mapped floodplain. #FloodSmart #NFIP #IceJam #floodinsurance

Images and Graphics



Flood insurance is a drop in the bucket compared to the cost of flood damage. Check your coverage.

#BeInformed



Floods are the most common natural disaster in the U.S. Sign up for alerts and warnings now.

#BeInformed



Never drive through flooded roads. Almost half of flood deaths happen in vehicles.

#BeInformed



COMING HOME
after a flood

-  Your home may be contaminated with mold or sewage—wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup.
-  Make sure the electricity and gas are shut off to avoid fire or getting hurt. Have an electrician check the house before turning the power back on.
-  Photograph flood damage for insurance purposes.
-  Contact your insurance agent as soon as possible to talk through your options.

FEMA

3 fast FLOOD FACTS

- ▶ Heavy rain can bring dangerous flash flooding.
- ▶ 6 inches of moving water can knock a person down.
- ▶ 2 feet of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.



Whether you're walking or driving, stay clear of floodwater. Share these facts with friends so they're safe too.



FLOOD WARNING

Flooding is happening or will happen soon.

Move to high ground immediately.

FLOOD WATCH

Flooding is possible.

Stay tuned to radio/TV for info and be ready to move to higher ground.



FEMA



DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Sewer back-up coverage is often an *add-on* to a homeowner's policy.
- ✓ Floods **aren't covered** by homeowners insurance.
- ✓ Flood insurance takes effect after 30 days.
- ✓ As long as your community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can buy a flood policy.

LEARN MORE AT FEMA.GOV



TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN.®



Ready ✓

WWW.READY.GOV/FLOODS

Renters insurance doesn't cover flood damage.



FEMA



NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

