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News Release

FEMA, NOAA AND PARTNERS ENCOURAGE U.S. RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR SPRINGTIME FLOODING

March 14th through 18th Marks 2011 Flood Awareness Week

WASHINGTON - With many communities throughout the nation facing threats of spring flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are once again joining forces to commemorate Flood Safety Awareness Week March 14 - 18.

FEMA and NOAA's National Weather Service are providing tips and information to help individuals and families prepare for flooding dangers during the week and throughout the spring season. The resources can be accessed at the Flood Safety Awareness Week landing page, located at www.ready.gov/floodawareness.

"As the nation's most common and expensive natural disaster, floods can strike virtually every community," said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. "We're encouraging individuals and families to take a few simple steps to protect themselves and their property. These include learning about their risk of flooding, having an emergency preparedness kit, storing important documents in a safe place and considering the purchase of flood insurance. Most homeowners insurance policies don't cover flooding, and most policies take 30 days to go into effect so it's important to act now."

Floods do more than damage property; they can also threaten lives if safety precautions are not followed. "Floods occur somewhere in the United States or its territories nearly every day of the year, killing nearly 100 people on average annually, and causing damage in the billions of dollars," said Jack Hayes, Ph.D., director of the National Weather Service. "Awareness, preparedness and action are the key ingredients to protecting lives and property when floods threaten. One essential safety tip is to never cross a road that is covered by water. Remember, Turn Around, Don't Drown."

According to the National Weather Service, more deaths occur due to flooding each year than from any other severe weather related hazard. The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water. All areas of the country can be at risk for flooding and when such conditions are forecast, important information and life-saving alerts are available at www.weather.gov.

More than half of all flood-related deaths result from vehicles being swept downstream. Remember, flash flooding can take only a few minutes to a few hours to develop. Be prepared to take detours and adjust your route due to road closures if there is standing water. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Flood water may be much deeper than it appears as the roadbed may be washed out. Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

In most cases, standard homeowner's insurance policies don't cover flood damages. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program makes flood insurance available to renters, homeowners and business owners through thousands of insurance agents located in nearly 21,000 communities around the nation. Flood coverage can be purchased for properties both in, and outside of, the highest risk areas but should be considered regardless of where you live since 20 percent of all flood insurance claims come from moderate-to-low-risk areas.

The average cost of a policy is \$570 a year, and Preferred Risk Policies outside of Special Flood Hazard Areas can be as low as \$129 a year. Individuals can learn more about seasonal flood risks and what to do to prepare by visiting FEMA's [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) website, or by calling 1-800-427-2419.

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit www.noaa.gov.

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