

What to DO?

Flood

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States. However, all floods are not alike. Some floods develop slowly. Yet New Mexico is most often faced with flash floods which can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries rocks, mud, and other debris and can sweep away most things in its path. Overland flooding occurs outside a defined river or stream, such as when a levee is breached, but still can be destructive.

Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live, but especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, arroyos, culverts, dry streambeds, or low-lying ground that appears harmless in dry weather can flood.

Know Your Flood Terms

Flood Watch

Flooding is possible.

Flash Flood Watch

Flash flooding is possible; prepare to move to higher ground.

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.

Before a Flood

The smartest thing you can do to prepare for floods is purchase flood insurance. To find out more about flood insurance go to www.floodsmart.gov.

During a Flood

Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.

If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.



TIPS

To prepare for a flood, you should:

Avoid building in a floodplain unless you elevate and reinforce your home.

Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.

Install "check valves" in sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.

Construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building.

If you must prepare to evacuate

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.

If you have to leave your home

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.

Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

After a Flood

Listen to a NOAA weather radio, battery-operated radio, or television for the latest emergency information. Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Stay away from damaged areas. Return home only when authorities say it is safe. ■



Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for Information

Be Prepared



Driving Flood Facts

TIPS

Driving Flood Facts

The following are important points to remember when 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 many vehicles.

Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.