

Flooding: Be Prepared

Floods can occur quickly and are the most common natural disaster in the United States. According to the National Weather Service (NWS), 106 people were killed by flooding and flash floods in the United States in 2022. The NWS reports that 14 people have already died because of flooding this year. While flooding can be dangerous and unpredictable, there are things you can do to be prepared in case of a flood emergency.

KNOW YOUR RISK

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers a Flood Map Service Center at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/> home that allows you to enter an address to find out if it is in a flood prone area. Knowing what kind of flood risks exist in your area can help you be prepared. This is especially important if you live in an area prone to flash flooding. Monitor early warning systems for your area. You may also sign up for alerts from the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio.

HAVE A PLAN

If you are in a flood prone area, be prepared to move to higher ground, shelter in place, or evacuate in case of a flood warning. Learn and practice evacuation routes before flooding becomes a problem. Also have supplies gathered and on hand in case immediate evacuation is necessary or services are cut off by flooding.

FEMA recommends that everyone should have a ready supply of at least three days' worth of food, water, and needed medications in case of an emergency. Do not forget to include supplies for pets. Keep extra batteries and charging equipment for phones or other critical equipment on hand. Important documents should be stored in waterproof containers and digital password protected copies should be created in case the container is lost or unreachable.

DURING A FLOOD

Ensure that you are in a safe location and monitor EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, local alerting systems for flood conditions. If you are told to evacuate, leave immediately. Travel conditions can change rapidly during a flood and delays in getting out can cost lives. Stay off bridges over fast-moving water as they can be washed away rapidly without warning. Never drive around road barriers or through flood waters. The majority of flood deaths occur when people drive through flood waters. It only takes one foot of moving water to sweep away a vehicle. Remember to turn around; don't drown.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

Seasonal flooding is a reality for several Colorado counties. County employees and residents should have a plan in place to deal with flooding before it happens as well as plans to deal with its aftermath. For more information on flood preparedness, visit www.ready.gov/floods or contact CTSI at 303-861-0507. 