



FEMA

Disaster News

May 14, 2008

AR-1751-08-NR-72

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SECONDS MAY MATTER IN FLASH FLOOD WARNING

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – As Arkansas continues to be pummeled by severe weather, residents do well to prepare for flooding. According to officials with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), it is important to understand the difference between a watch and a warning and between a flood and a flash flood.

In short, **a watch means that flooding is possible** and those affected need to prepare to evacuate. **A warning means that flooding is occurring or about to occur** and those in the affected area should go to higher ground. The need for action is most urgent in the case of a flash flood. While some floods can take several hours or days to develop, **flash floods can take only a few minutes to develop**. In all cases it is important to monitor the situation, preferably by a battery-powered device.

Floods

Watches

Actions during a flood watch include:

- Fueling the car in case evacuation is necessary; and
- Moving outdoor furniture indoors and moving valuable possessions to a higher level.

Warnings

Action during a flood warning include:

- IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF THE AFFECTED AREA IF ADVISED.

Flash floods

Watches

Actions during a flash flood watch include:

- Staying alert to signs of flash flooding; and
- Making preparations to evacuate, in case that becomes necessary.

Warnings

Action during a flash flood warning include:

- IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF THE AFFECTED AREA. SECONDS MAY MATTER.

Drivers should not be lulled into a sense of false security when they encounter flood waters. If they are in a vehicle during a flash flood or if water is rising around it, all occupants of the vehicle should

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get out immediately and get to higher ground. When water is running across a road, drivers should always turn around and choose a different route. Just six inches of water can cause tires to lose traction and slide; 12 inches will float many cars.

Planning helps evacuation go as smoothly as possible. Officials advise residents to assemble kits with household emergency supplies, including such items as food, water, sanitation supplies, prescription medicine, a NOAA weather radio, and fresh batteries.

Planning should also include a designated location where family members will meet after evacuation. It is often helpful to agree on an out-of-state relative or friend as a contact that family members can call if they become separated during evacuation.

Additional information on preparedness for floods and other disasters is available online at www.ready.gov.

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The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) is the state's homeland security and emergency management agency. The agency works to identify and lessen the effects of emergencies, disasters and threats to Arkansas by developing effective prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery actions for all disasters and emergencies.

FEMA coordinates the Federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terrorism.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

Editors: For more information on Arkansas disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov or <http://www.adem.arkansas.gov/>.

Disaster recovery assistance is available to any individual without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status.