

Flood Safety Awareness Week March 19-23, 2007

Flooding is a coast to coast threat to the United States and its territories in all months of the year. National Flood Safety Awareness Week is intended to highlight some of the many ways floods can occur, the hazards associated with floods, and what you can do to save life and property.

What does regret sound like?

Consider the real-life story of a young man driving home from work in 2002. The man was tired from a long day at work. He had picked up his children and was heading home.

Heavy rains that day caused widespread flooding. He approached a low water crossing — one he had crossed countless times before — flooded with the recent rains. To go another way would have meant another 20 minutes in the car. He chose to drive across. After all, his 4 wheel drive pickup could surely navigate a water crossing he had taken many times before.

His truck was swept away by the swift water. The water carried him and his family downstream. The man survived but his two children, age 3 years and 13 months, did not.

What is 20 minutes to that man now, and what would he give to have that choice again? If you ask him what choice he would make if had the same opportunity, do you think you would hear what regret sounds like?

Flooding is dangerous, and we hope the information we present during Flood Safety Awareness Week will help you make the right choice when you encounter flooding.

Why Flood Safety Awareness Week?

The answer is simple. Flooding is the #1 storm-related killer — not tornadoes, not severe thunderstorms, not winter storms. It ranks only behind heat waves in number of casualties for all weather events. Flooding also takes many different forms, from river flooding to flash flooding to snowmelt flooding. It occurs in any month of the year, any time of day. It is a threat in almost any place.

More than half of all flood-related deaths are drownings that result from vehicles caught in flood waters and then swept downstream. Eighty percent of all flood deaths occur when people drive into flooded roadways or simply walk through moving water. Many of these drownings are preventable if people do not drive or walk into flooded roads, sidewalks, etc. People often underestimate the force of water.

But, flooding doesn't happen very often. That's why it's important to know how to find important information, how to prepare for potential flooding, where to obtain flood insurance — if it is required in your area, and general safety tips to help keep you, your family and your property safe.

Hopefully, flooding will never affect you. But if it does, we want you to be prepared for whatever comes your way.

<http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/>

<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dvn/?n=floodsafety>



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