



GET READY!

FLOODS

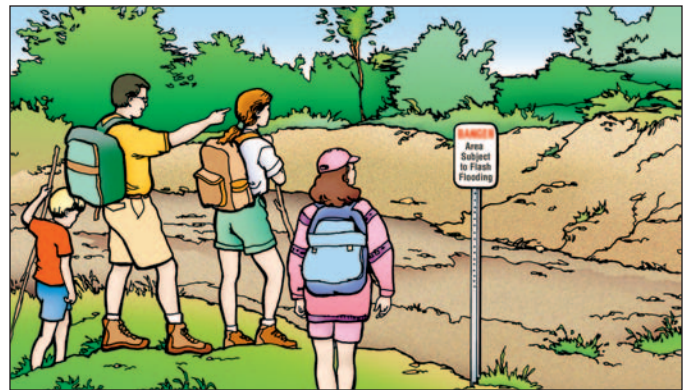
Floods can happen everywhere, making them one of the country's most common natural disasters. Flooding poses a greater threat in low-lying areas, near water, downstream from dams. Even the smallest streams, creek beds or drains can overflow and create flooding. During periods of heavy rain or extended periods of steady rains, be aware of the possibility of a flood. Flash floods develop quickly—anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Listen to local weather reports for flooding information.

Before

- Check to see if you have flood insurance coverage.
- Raise your furnace, water heater, or electrical panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps.
- Construct barriers, such as levees, berms, or flood walls, to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- During a flood or flash flood watch, be prepared to evacuate, including fill your car's gas tank; bring in outside furniture; move valuables to high points in your home; and unplug electrical appliances and move them to high points.
- During a flood warning, evacuate if you are so advised.
- During a flash flood warning, immediately seek higher ground.
- Keep your emergency supplies kit, including water, stored in an easily accessible, waterproof place.

During

- If time allows, call someone to let them know where you are going, and check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible. Even water only several inches deep can be dangerous. If you have to walk through water, use a stick to check the firmness of the ground ahead of you. Avoid moving water.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If your car becomes surrounded by rising water, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines.



After

- Do not return home until local authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Do not drink or cook with your tap water until local authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid floodwaters, which could be contaminated or electrically charged.
- Watch out for areas in which the floodwaters may have receded, leaving weakened roadways.
- Be extra careful when entering buildings that may have hidden structural damage.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewer systems are a serious health hazard.

