

Disaster Preparedness



Hazard mitigation planning is a systematic process that involves identifying, assessing, and reducing the risks associated with natural hazards. Its primary goal is to minimize the impact of future disasters on the community, infrastructure, and the environment.

Hazard mitigation planning is a proactive approach to disaster management, emphasizing long-term risk reduction rather than solely focusing on disaster response and recovery. Hazard mitigation planning is a community-wide initiative. In a world where climate change is contributing to an increase in extreme weather events, understanding disaster preparedness is more crucial than ever. Reading about disaster preparedness equips individuals with invaluable knowledge, practical tips, and life-saving strategies. By taking the initiative to educate ourselves, we not only enhance our personal readiness but also contribute to building a stronger, more resilient community. Here are some safety tips from the National Weather Service:





FLOOD SAFETY

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

BEFORE A FLOOD

- ✓ Stay informed: Visit weather.gov or tune into your local news for the latest forecast.
- ✓ Determine whether your home, school or work is in an area likely to flood.
- ✓ Learn which roadways are likely to flood and find an alternative route so you can avoid them.
- ✓ Create a communications plan so your family will know how to connect during an emergency.
- ✓ Assemble an emergency kit.
- ✓ Prepare for possible evacuation. Pack your bags and include items for your pets so you are ready to leave at a moment's notice.
- ✓ Charge all essential electronics.
- ✓ Be Proactive: Leave before the flooding starts to avoid getting stranded.

DURING A FLOOD

- ✓ Stay informed: Tune into your local news for updates on flooding in progress.
- ✓ Get to higher ground if you are in an area that is subject to flooding.
- ✓ Follow evacuation orders and heed warning signs.
- ✓ If you have time before you evacuate, disconnect utilities and appliances.
- ✓ Avoid floodwaters: It is NEVER safe to drive or walk through them.

AFTER A FLOOD

- ✓ Stay informed: Tune into your local news for updates on affected areas and the safety of your drinking water.
- ✓ Avoid floodwaters: Standing water can hide chemicals that can make you sick, power lines that can cause electrocution and sharp debris that can seriously harm you.
- ✓ Avoid disaster areas: Your presence may hamper emergency operations.
- ✓ Heed road closure and cautionary signs.
- ✓ Wait for the "all-clear" before returning to an area that was impacted by flooding.
- ✓ Contact your family and loved ones to let them know you are okay.

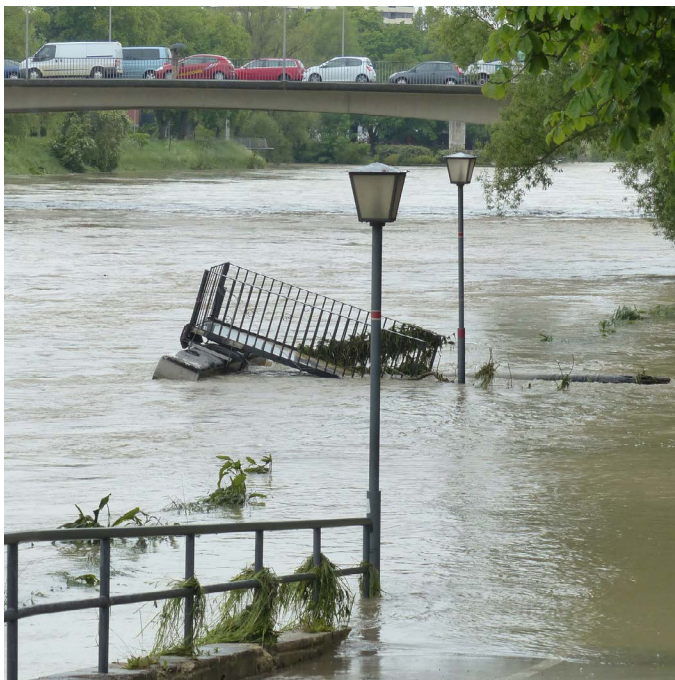


Image from the FEMA Photo Library



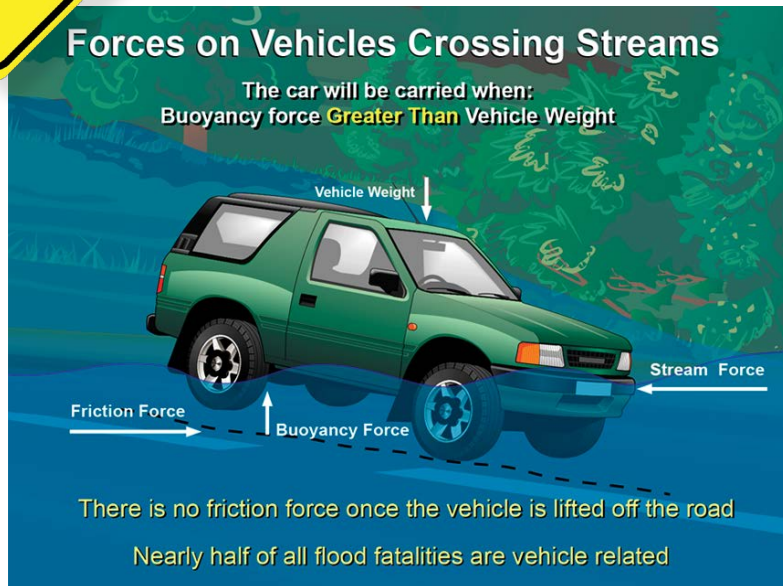
TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN®

MOST FLOOD-RELATED DEATHS AND INJURIES COULD BE AVOIDED IF PEOPLE FOLLOWED THIS SIMPLE ADVICE:

Turn Around Don't Drown®. More than 50 percent of flood-related deaths are due to someone driving or walking into floodwaters.

- ✓ **6 INCHES OF FAST-MOVING WATER** can knock adults off their feet and sweep them away.
- ✓ **12 INCHES OF MOVING WATER** can carry off a small car.
- ✓ **18 TO 24 INCHES OF MOVING WATER** can carry away larger vehicles including trucks, vans and SUVs.

If you come to an area that is covered with water, you may not know the depth of the water or the condition of the road or ground underneath. This is especially true at night, when your vision is limited. Play it safe. Whether driving or walking, any time you come to a flooded area, Turn Around Don't Drown®.





WILDFIRE SAFETY

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

PREPAREDNESS

Prepare long before the threat of a wildland fire so your home or business is ready in case of a fire:

- ✓ Create defensible space by clearing brush away from your home.
- ✓ Use fire-resistant landscaping and harden your home with fire-safe construction measures.
- ✓ Put together a basic emergency supply kit. Check emergency equipment, such as flashlights and generators. See [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for tips on preparing an emergency kit.
- ✓ Plan escape routes and make sure all those residing within your home or business know the plan of action.
- ✓ Before an emergency happens, sit down with your family or close friends and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go, and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supplies kit or another safe place where you can access it quickly. Start at the [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) emergency plan web page.
- ✓ Review your insurance policies to ensure that you have adequate coverage for your home and personal property.
- ✓ Understand NWS forecast products, especially the meaning of NWS watches and warnings. See [back of brochure](#).



GET SET - BE AWARE

- ✓ Pack your emergency items.
- ✓ Stay aware of the latest wildfire news and information from your local National Weather Service office and local government emergency management office.
- ✓ Find out what type of emergencies could occur and how you should respond.
- ✓ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or other radio or TV stations for the latest news.
- ✓ Follow instructions issued by local officials and leave immediately if ordered!
- ✓ If NOT ordered to evacuate, use battery powered flashlights. **Do NOT** light campfires, candles or anything else that could start a fire.
- ✓ If you smoke, be sure to extinguish your cigarette or cigar before disposing of it. Never throw a burning item on the ground.
- ✓ Bag-up trash, clippings and other easily flammable items.
- ✓ Fill up your vehicle in case you need to evacuate.





UNDERSTAND WILDFIRE **WARNING** AND **WATCHES**

GO - ACT EARLY!

- ✓ A big threat after the fire are snags (fire weakened trees), be aware of the threat posed by falling trees.
- ✓ Follow your personal wildland fire action plan. Following your plan will not only support your safety, but will allow firefighters to best maneuver resources to combat the fire.
- ✓ Continue listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or the local news for the latest updates.
- ✓ If you evacuate, return home only when officials say it is safe.
- ✓ Once home, drive only if necessary. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects in the road, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks that might collapse.
- ✓ Walk carefully around the outside of your home to check for damaged power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.
- ✓ Stay out of any building in which you smell gas, see smoke or flames or if the building or home was damaged by fire, or if the authorities have not declared it safe.
- ✓ Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas dealing with power outages. Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. Review generator safety.
- ✓ Use battery-powered flashlights. **Do NOT** use candles. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas if present.



Red Flag Warning: Take Action!

NWS issues a Red Flag Warning in conjunction with land management agencies to alert you to critical fire weather conditions ongoing or expected to occur within the next 12-48 hours.

Fire Weather Watch: Be Prepared!

NWS issues a Fire Weather Watch when critical fire weather conditions are possible in the next one to four days (18 to 96 hours). In cases of dry lightning, NWS may issue a Fire Weather Watch for the next 12 hours.





WINTER WEATHER SAFETY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

BEFORE A WINTER STORM

Before the storm strikes, make sure your home, office and vehicles are stocked with the supplies you might need if stranded in a winter storm. Know how to dress for varying degrees of cold weather.

AT HOME AND WORK.

- ✓ Your primary concerns at home or work during a winter storm are loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day. In either place, you should have **Home & Work Winter Storm Survival Kit**.

IN VEHICLES.

- ✓ Before you leave the house, call 511 for the latest traffic weather conditions. **TAKE IT SLOW IN THE SNOW.**
- ✓ Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. Carry a **Car Winter Storm Survival Kit**.

ON THE FARM, PET OWNERS.

- ✓ Move animals to sheltered areas or bring pets inside.
- ✓ Haul extra feed to nearby feeding areas.
- ✓ Have water available. Most animals die from dehydration in winter storms.
- ✓ Make sure pets have plenty of food, water, and a warm shelter.

DURING A WINTER STORM

When caught in a winter storm, there are life-saving actions you can take to protect yourself outside, in a vehicle and inside your home or office.

OUTSIDE

- ✓ **Find Shelter.**
- ✓ **When There Is No Shelter Nearby:** Build a simple temporary shelter or snow cave for protection from the wind.
- ✓ **Melt Snow for Drinking Water:** Eating unmelted snow will lower your body temperature.
- ✓ **Exercise:** From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating.

IN VEHICLES

- ✓ Slow down!
- ✓ Make sure your vehicle is completely clear of ice or snow before starting the trip.
- ✓ Let someone know where you are going and what route you will take.
- ✓ Don't leave the house without the following: a fully charged mobile phone, car charger, and an emergency supplies kit in your car.
- ✓ If your car gets stuck during a storm, stay in the vehicle!
- ✓ Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- ✓ Clear snow from the exhaust pipe to avoid gas poisoning. While running the motor, open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ✓ Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- ✓ After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

INSIDE

Stay Inside: When using a fire place, wood stove, space heater, or other heating device, use fire safeguards and properly ventilate. If you have a gas furnace, make sure it is not blocked by a snowdrift. If you have an upstairs gas furnace that vents out the roof, you may need to turn off the upstairs unit the snow melts from your roof.

AFTER A WINTER STORM

Caution! Winter Storm Dangers Linger

When the snow and ice melt, it's tempting to relieve that cabin fever and hit the roads. But melting snow can cause floods, partially cleared roads may be icy or blocked, and creeks and rivers often overflow from the rush of melting snow and ice. Heavy snow may have knocked down power lines and caused gas leaks, both of which can be deadly, but are not obvious at first glance. Follow the tips below to stay safe.

- ✓ Stay Informed. Stay tuned to your local news or 511 for updated information on road conditions.
- ✓ Avoid Flooded Roads and Heed Road Danger Signs.
- ✓ Check Your Home, Contact Family and Isolated Neighbors.
- ✓ Roadway Hazards.



WINTER WEATHER ALERTS

Winter weather-related Warnings, Watches and Advisories are issued by your local National Weather Service office. Each office knows the local area and will issue Warnings, Watches or Advisories based on local criteria. For example, the amount of snow that triggers a “Winter Storm Warning” in the Northern Plains is typically much higher than the amount needed to trigger a “Winter Storm Warning” in the Southeast:

- ✓ **Blizzard Warnings**
- ✓ **Winter Storm Warnings**
- ✓ **Wind Chill Warnings**
- ✓ **Lake Effect Snow Warnings**
- ✓ **Snow Squall Warnings**
- ✓ **Blizzard Watches**
- ✓ **Winter Storm Watches**
- ✓ **Wind Chill Watches**
- ✓ **Lake Effect Snow Watches**
- ✓ **Winter Weather Advisories**
- ✓ **Freezing Rain Advisories**
- ✓ **Wind Chill Advisories**
- ✓ **Lake Effect Snow Advisories**

WINTER WEATHER KEY TERMS

- ✓ **FREEZING RAIN:** Rain that freezes when it hits a surface; creating a coating of ice on roads, walkways, trees and power lines.
- ✓ **SLEET:** Rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes moisture on roads to freeze and become slick.
- ✓ **WIND CHILL:** A measure of how cold people feel due to the combined effect of wind and cold temperatures; the Wind Chill Index is based on the rate of heat loss from exposed skin. Both cold temperatures and wind remove heat from the body; as the wind speed increases during cold conditions, a body loses heat more quickly. Eventually, the internal body temperature also falls and hypothermia can develop. Animals also feel the effects of wind chill, but inanimate objects, such as vehicles and buildings, do not. They will only cool to the actual air temperature, although much faster during windy conditions.

