

Preparedness Alert

Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
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COLORADO
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Department of Public Safety

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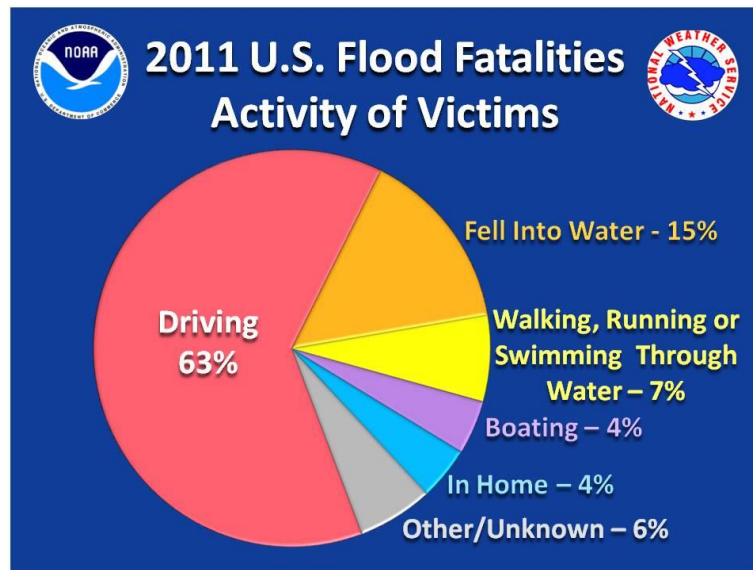
Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC)
Capt. J.P. Burt, Director

Mission
Provide leadership and support to Colorado communities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond and recover from all-hazard events including acts of terrorism.

Prepare for flooding

Floods can be one of the most damaging natural disasters around. What makes flooding exceptionally difficult for individuals is that flood damage is not covered by traditional homeowners' policies. This can leave the unprepared

exceptionally vulnerable to financial hardship following a flood event. Because of Colorado's propensity for wildfires, our state is particularly susceptible to flooding in recent burn areas. And it's not just those in mountain settings who are at risk. Those in the eastern plains are vulnerable to overland flooding. Read on for tips on preparing for this danger.



Before the flood

- **Get flood insurance** if you are in a flood-prone area. Go to www.floodsmart.gov to find out what your flood risk is, get cost estimates and find an agent who sells flood insurance. Keep in mind that there is a 30-day waiting before flood insurance goes into effect, so if you are at risk, get insurance now.
- **Get prepared** by making sure your family has a 72-hour kit. A 72-hour kit should contain, at a minimum, drinking water, non-perishable food, first aid, blankets, a radio and a flashlight. These items should be stored in an easily accessible, portable, waterproof container. Also make sure to have copies of important documents, such as insurance information, ready to go. More information on packing a kit is available at www.readycolorado.com.



- **Prepare your home.** Make sure your sump pump is working, clear debris from gutters and downspouts, anchor any fuel tanks, raise electrical components and move furniture, valuables and important documents to a safe place.
- **Keep informed.** Watch out for weather that could cause flash floods and make sure that you listen to the news so you are aware of flood danger in your area. Keep updated on road closures in case you need to evacuate. An inexpensive [NOAA Weather Radio](#), available from many stores that sell home electronics, is also a great way to receive prompt alerts about threatening weather, including flash floods.

During the flood

- **Keep informed.** Listen to the television or radio or search the Internet (if available) for information and instructions.
- **Secure your home.** If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- **Turn off utilities** at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- **Do not walk through moving water.** Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- **Do not drive into flooded areas.** If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be swept away quickly.
- **Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks,** particularly during threatening conditions.

After the flood

- **Use local alerts and warning systems** to get information and expert informed advice as soon as available.
- **Avoid moving water.**
- **Stay away from damaged areas** unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organization.
- **Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas.** You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- **Play it safe.** Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.

Flood terms

- **Flood Watch -**
Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
- **Flash Flood Watch -**
Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
- **Flood Warning -**
Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- **Flash Flood Warning**
- A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.



- **Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.**
- **Roads may still be closed** because they have been damaged or are covered by water. Barricades have been placed for your protection. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, go another way.
- **If you must walk or drive in areas that have been flooded:**
 - Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
 - Flooding may have caused familiar places to change. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways. Flood debris may hide animals and broken bottles, and it's also slippery. Avoid walking or driving through it.
- **Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded.** Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- **Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.**
- **Use extreme caution when entering buildings;** there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.

For more information

- General preparedness information - <http://READYColorado.com> (Colorado Department of Public Safety)
- Ready.gov flood preparedness information - <http://www.ready.gov/floods>
- Information on flood risk and insurance - <http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/>
- Floodsmart flood outreach toolkit - <http://www.floodsmart.gov/toolkits/flood/index.htm>
- Flood preparedness and recovery information (North Dakota State University) - <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/flood/>
- National Weather Service flood safety page - <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/>

Dealing with disaster

- Ask for help.
- Be extra patient
- Determine what's really important
- Don't expect things to restore themselves instantly. Accept that restoration takes time.
- Be aware of the tendency to resort to bad habits when you are under stress.
- Get enough sleep. Being a "sleep cheat" ultimately will backfire. Try to get seven to eight hours of sleep every night.
- Learn acceptance. Don't worry about things you cannot control. Conserve your energies for the things you can control.