

Governor Ted Strickland



American Red Cross
Emergency Management Association of Ohio
National Weather Service
Ohio Citizen Corps
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Commerce-State Fire Marshal
Ohio News Network

Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Department of Public Safety-Ohio EMA
Ohio Insurance Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Encourages Ohioans to Prepare Themselves
and Their Families against Flooding**
Flood Safety Awareness Week: March 17-21

Columbus, OH – Natural hazards such as tornadoes and flooding are incidents that typically occur during the spring and summer. But as the Midwestern and Southern states have experienced at the beginning of this year, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and massive flooding can happen at any time, any season.

In early February, heavy rains and strong winds pummeled northern Ohio, resulting in nearly 1,600 reported power outages, thousands of homes and businesses flooded, and seven counties declaring local emergencies. Three of these counties received a federal declaration in August 2007 for flooding.

The National Weather Service, a member of the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, recognizes that flooding is Ohio's, and the nation's, most costly and common natural disaster and has declared this week, March 17-21, as Flood Safety Awareness Week. Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 23-29, with a Statewide Tornado Drill on Wednesday, March 26 at 9:50 a.m.

The Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness suggests the following preparedness and mitigation measures for Ohioans to better prepare and protect themselves against flooding:

Know the Terms

- A flood/flash flood WATCH means a flood or flash flood is possible in your area.
- A flood/flash flood WARNING means flooding or a flash flood is already occurring or will occur in your area very soon.
- Floods can take several hours to days to develop; Flash floods can take only a few minutes or hours to develop.
- Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio or a local television or radio station for flood information and possible evacuation orders/instructions.

During a Flood Watch/Warning

- When a flood WATCH is issued, move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home. Fill your vehicle(s) gas tanks, in case an evacuation notice is issued.
- When a flood WARNING is issued, listen to a NOAA Weather Radio, local radio or TV stations for flood information and advice. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible.

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During a Flash Flood Watch/Warning

- When a flash flood WATCH is issued, be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.
- When a flash flood WARNING is issued, evacuate immediately. You may only have seconds to escape. Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Never drive around barricades nor drive through rising or moving waters.

Reduce Potential Flood Damage

- Invest in flood insurance. Homeowner insurance policies do not include flood insurance. Contact the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at 1-800-638-6620 or visit the NFIP Flood Smart Web site at www.floodsmart.gov.
- Raise your furnace, water heater and electrical panel, if they are in areas of your home that could flood.
- Consult with a professional for further information if these and other measures can be taken to reduce damage.

For additional information on flood safety and preparing a disaster plan and survival kit, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Web site at www.weathersafety.ohio.gov and the National Weather Service Web site at www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/.

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