



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Officials Urge Thunderstorm and Flood Safety This Week *NWS Issues Flash Flood Watch for 28 Ohio Counties***

**COLUMBUS, OH** – This week is National Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Not only are citizens encouraged to know what to do before, during and after severe thunder and lightning storms, but they should prepare for all summer weather hazards, including tornadoes and floods.

Residents in Brunswick, Medina County continue cleanup efforts after last night's tornado and severe storms. The National Weather Service (NWS) confirmed that either a high EF-1 or low EF-2 tornado touched down, damaging several homes.

Strong thunderstorms and high winds downed trees and caused power outages in central Ohio. This morning the NWS issued a **flash flood watch** until 10 p.m. tonight for the following counties: Ashland, Ashtabula, Crawford, Cuyahoga, Erie, Geauga, Hancock, Holmes, Huron, Knox, Lake, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Medina, Morrow, Ottawa, Portage, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Wayne, Wood, and Wyandot. A flash flood watch means that there is a risk or potential for rapid flooding to occur.

Remember: Summertime is peak season for thunderstorms, flooding and tornadoes. Preparedness for all severe weather is crucial.

The National Weather Service and State Officials suggest taking the following severe weather safety measures:

**Be Informed – Watch for Developing Thunderstorms.** Listen to local weather reports on the radio or television stations. Know the difference between storm watches and storm warnings. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert that sounds and notifies when hazardous weather is in or near your area.

**Have a Plan.** Before a flood, plan and practice an evacuation route. Know ahead of time where to go if you need to leave your home quickly. Ensure you have your disaster supply kit stocked and ready to go in case you must evacuate. Ensure the household's emergency communication plan is updated. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

**Turn Around Don't Drown™.** Avoid flooded areas, especially if the water is flowing quickly. Never attempt to cross flowing streams; road beds may be washed out under the flood waters. NEVER drive or walk through flooded roadways or flowing flood water. If a bridge or overpass is closed, do not attempt to cross it.

**Practice Safety after the Storm/Flood.** Listen to local alerts and warning systems to receive information on assistance that may be provided by the county, state or other organizations.

- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash flooding could occur. Listen to local weather reports for storm warning and information.
- If you had to evacuate your home, only return when authorities indicate it is safe.

Additional Flood Safety Information is as follows:

### **Cleanup**

- Mold is a likely problem in flooded homes. Mold has the potential to affect the health of all family members. It is important to remove all water and fix any leaks before cleaning. Clean hard surfaces with a solution of bleach and water; make sure to ventilate the area when using chlorine bleach. Wear a filter mask and gloves to avoid contact with the mold. Let the bleach and water sit for 15 minutes and then dry the area thoroughly. Wet, porous materials, such as carpeting, wallboard, insulation, wallpaper and furniture should be discarded because they remain a source of mold growth.
- Use fans and dehumidifiers to air and dry out the home. If the weather permits, open doors and windows.

### **Food Safety**

- Food that comes in contact with flood water can also pose a serious health risk. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) recommends throwing away any product if there is any doubt about its safety.
- ODH also recommends throwing away home-canned goods if the tops have been exposed to flooding. Food in paper containers, cloth or cardboard packaging that has been exposed to flood water should also be discarded, along with soft drinks and condiments using capped containers.

### **Water Safety**

- Flood water may contain various bacteria, viruses and other infectious organisms that may cause disease. Flood water may also contain fecal material from overflowing sewage systems.
- If you have a private well, run cold water for about 30 minutes to allow the well to recharge naturally. Do not save the water. Have the well disinfected and tested before drinking or using for cooking. If you must use tap water, boil it vigorously for at least one minute. If you cannot boil it, add 16 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for 30 minutes. This method should be used only with water that is clean in appearance and free of odors.
- Don't let children drink or put toys in flood waters. If your child shows any signs or symptoms of illness after being in flood waters such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, contact your physician as soon as possible. If you cannot make it to your physician, go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

For additional weather safety information, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness website: [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov).