



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 Emergency Management Agency
Ohio Insurance Institute

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHIOANS ENCOURAGED TO LEARN ABOUT THE HAZARDS OF FLOODING

National Flood Safety Awareness Week is March 19-23, 2007

(Columbus, OH) – Nationally, floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disaster in terms of loss of life and economic hardship, a fact known all too well in the state of Ohio. In the summer of 2006, nine northern Ohio counties were declared federal disaster areas due to flooding.

The National Weather Service, a member of the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, has designated March 19 through 23 as National Flood Safety Awareness Week. This week is intended to highlight some of the many ways floods can occur, the hazards associated with floods and what citizens can do to save and protect their lives and property.

The key to being safe from floods is to know the different types of floods.

A flood is a condition that occurs when water overflows the natural or artificial confines of a stream or body of water, or accumulates by drainage over low-lying areas. Floods can be slow or fast rising, but generally develop over a period of days.

Flash floods occur very rapidly, often within six hours of a heavy rain event and can cause extreme damage. Structures such as buildings or bridges, or objects such as trees can be washed away by walls of water that reach heights of 10 to 20 feet. During a flash flood warning, the safest thing to do is to move immediately to higher ground.

Know what to do before a flood.

- Check with your local floodplain administrator to determine if you live in a flood-prone area. A listing of floodplain administrators is available on the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Web site at: www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/floodpln/refrencs.htm.
- Consider installing check valves in building sewer traps to prevent floodwaters from backing up into sewer drains.
- Prepare an evacuation plan. Decide in advance, where your family should go in the event of a flood emergency. Practice your evacuation plan.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit. Include a first aid kit; essential medicines; non-perishable food; bottled water and juices; clothing; battery-operated radio; flashlights; extra batteries; special needs essentials – items to sustain every member of the household for at least three days.
- Protect your home items against rising waters. Move furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home. Raise the furnace, hot water heater and electrical system panel with the help of a professional.
- Purchase and maintain flood insurance. Damages caused by floods are not covered by homeowner and renter insurance policies. Learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program by visiting the Web site: www.floodsmart.gov.

“Teaching Ohioans Severe Weather Safety and Preparedness”

www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

Know what to do during a flood watch/warning.

- Stay aware of current weather/storm information by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or a local radio or television station.
- Be prepared to evacuate. Listen for Emergency Alert System messages for evacuation instructions. If your area is advised to evacuate, do so immediately and follow recommended evacuation routes.
- If you are driving and have come to a flooding area or roadway, turn around and go another way. NEVER drive through flooding roads or low water crossings. If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapidly rising waters may engulf the vehicle and sweep it away.

Since 1978, the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness has been dedicated in educating Ohioans on severe weather safety and preparedness. Committee members include the American Red Cross; Emergency Management Association of Ohio; National Weather Service; Ohio Citizen Corps; Ohio Departments of Aging, Education, Health, Insurance and Natural Resources; Ohio Emergency Management Agency; Ohio Insurance Institute; Ohio News Network; and the State Fire Marshal.

For additional information on flood safety and other preparedness tips, log onto www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.

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