

**Governor Ted Strickland**



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness' National Weather Service Promotes Flood Safety  
With 'Turn Around Don't Drown' Campaign  
*Flood Safety Awareness Week is March 16-20, 2009***

Columbus, OH – Flooding, tornadoes and strong winds are natural hazards that ordinarily take place during the spring and summer months. But September's remnants of Hurricane Ike, and January's power outages and snow, ice and wind storms are recent reminders that Ohio's weather is anything but ordinary.

Flooding, alone, is a coast-to-coast threat to the United States, causing more damage than any other severe weather-related event. Flooding can occur at any time during any month.

Hancock, Lorain, Ottawa and Putnam counties, and the surrounding areas of Cleveland and Toledo are dealing with moderate river flooding after being inundated by heavy rains over the weekend. The National Weather Service issued a flood warning for northwest Ohio today, including Hancock, Putnam, Seneca and Wood counties. All of northeast Ohio remains under a flood watch through Wednesday.

The National Weather Service (NWS), a member of the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, is promoting *National Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 16-20* to bring attention to the different kinds of flooding, the hazards associated with flooding, and what people can do to protect lives and properties.

**Know the difference between a flood and a flash flood**

A **Flood** occurs when there is an overflow of water onto normally dry land. Flooding is caused by rising water in an existing waterway such as a river, stream or drainage ditch. Flooding can occur when melting snow combines with heavy rain in the winter and early spring and when severe thunderstorms bring heavy rain in the spring and summer.

**Flash Flooding** can occur within six hours of a rain event; or after a dam or levee failure; or following a sudden release of water held back by ice or debris jam. Flash floods often catch people unprepared because there may not be a warning that these sudden, potentially deadly floods are coming.

**Know the different categories of flooding**

For specific river gages along a river or stream, the NWS often issues flood warnings for that point along the river. Once the river reaches flood stage, the following flood categories are used to describe the current and forecast flooding:

- **Minor Flooding** – With minor flooding there is minimal or no property damage, but could create some public threat or inconvenience.

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- **Moderate Flooding** – With moderate flooding there is some inundation of structures and roads near streams. Some evacuations of people and/or transfer of property to higher elevations are necessary.
- **Major Flooding** – With major flooding there is extensive inundation of structures and roads. Significant evacuation of people and/or transfer of property to higher elevations are necessary.

Along with Flood Safety Awareness Week, the National Weather Service promotes the Turn Around Don't Drown (TADD) safety campaign to warn people of the hazards of driving vehicles or walking through flood waters.

To avoid getting caught in flooded areas and risking life and safety, the NWS and the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness suggest the following tips:

- Monitor the NOAA Weather Radio or local TV or radio station for vital weather-related information.
- If flooding occurs, move to higher ground immediately. Leave areas subject to flooding. This includes dips in roads, low spots, canyons and washes.
- Never allow children to play near high water, storm drains or ditches. Hidden dangers, such as broken glass or debris, often lie beneath the water. In addition, flowing floodwaters can easily sweep children and adults away.
- Avoid areas that are already flooded, especially if the floodwaters are flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams on foot or in vehicles. It only takes six inches of fast flowing water to sweep a person off his/her feet. *Turn Around Don't Drown.*
- Never drive on a flooded road. Flooded roads often have significant damage hidden by floodwaters. In addition, most vehicles lose contact with the road in six inches of water and can be swept away in 18 or 24 inches of water. *Turn Around Don't Drown.*
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams or washes, particularly when threatening weather conditions exist.
- Be especially cautious when driving at night. It is harder to recognize flood dangers.

Ohio's Spring Severe Weather Awareness Week is March 22-28, with a Statewide Tornado Drill scheduled for Wednesday, March 25 at 9:50 a.m.

For additional information on flood safety, severe weather preparedness, and the NWS Turn Around Don't Drown safety campaign, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness Web site at [www.weathersafety.ohio.gov](http://www.weathersafety.ohio.gov) and the NWS site: [www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/tadd.shtml](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/tadd.shtml)

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