



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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Ohio EMA Encourages Ohioans to Prepare Before the Storm *This is National Flood Safety Awareness Week*

COLUMBUS, OH – March 14-18 is National Flood Safety Awareness Week – a weather safety campaign promoted by the National Weather Service. Ohioans were reminded a couple of weeks ago that it is never too early to prepare for floods and other severe weather events.

Heavy rains and severe storms swept across the state overnight, February 27. Three to four inches of rain accumulated over a 24-hour period across northern Ohio. The rain combined with warm temperatures and rapid snow melting resulted in moderate to major flooding. On Feb. 28, a woman in Huron County died after her vehicle was swept away by flood waters. By March 3, 11 counties declared local state of emergencies.

“Flooding is the most common natural hazard that occurs in Ohio,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency. “By taking steps such as planning for disasters before they happen, and mitigating homes, lives and properties could be saved.”

Ohio EMA in conjunction with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness suggests the following to help lessen the damages of flooding:

- Check with your local floodplain administrator to determine if you live in a flood-prone area. You can access a list of Ohio’s floodplain administrators by clicking the link provided by Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Soil and Water:
www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/7/floodpln/communitylist.pdf
- Purchase flood insurance. Keep in mind: there is a 30-day waiting period before a new or modified flood insurance policy goes into effect, unless it is a condition for obtaining a mortgage. Visit www.floodsmart.gov to find a list of flood insurance agents near you.
- Make a disaster supply kit for the home and a ‘to-go’ kit in case you need to evacuate your home. Kits should include: battery-operated radio, flashlight, first-aid kit, prescribed medications, clothing, rain gear, non-perishable food/high-energy snacks, bottled water, cell phone, battery charger, emergency contact list, hygiene supplies. For a complete list of preparedness kits, visit the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness website at: www.weathersafety.ohio.gov

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- Mitigate your home to reduce damages from future flooding. Some simple, inexpensive steps homeowners can take include: Raising electrical system components; elevating the water heater and heating system on a masonry base at least 12 inches or relocating them to an upper level; elevating the washer and dryer or building a floodwall around appliances; anchoring the fuel tank to the floor or wall to prevent it from overturning or floating away; installing sewer backflow valves. For additional mitigation information, click on the FEMA link: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/protectingyourself.shtm>

Remember – Flood waters can be extremely dangerous. The best protection during a flood is to leave the area and seek shelter on higher ground. Be attentive of current weather conditions and evacuation notices by listening to a NOAA Weather Radio or weather updates on local television or radio stations.

Never attempt to drive or walk through flood waters. Water could be deeper than it appears or the road could be washed away beneath the water. Six inches of swiftly moving floodwater can knock an adult off his feet. And just two feet of moving water can float and sweep away most vehicles.

For additional information on Flood Safety Awareness Week and Turn Around, Don't Drown, click on the National Weather Service Site: www.nws.noaa.gov/floodsafety/

The primary mission of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, is to coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. This mission is carried out by closely interfacing with local, state and federal agencies in an effort to bring resources of recovery and support to Ohioans impacted by the disaster. In addition to disaster response and recovery, Ohio EMA agency activities include: education, training, planning and preparedness - strengthening Ohio's first responder capabilities and improving communication across the state.

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