



Fact Sheet - Floods

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States.

Flooding most often occurs when an unusually large number of rainstorms hit an area in a fairly short period of time, overwhelming banks of rivers and streams. Another common source of flooding is unusual tidal activity that extends the reach of the ocean farther inland than normal.

Floods may also occur when a dam breaks, releasing a massive amount of water, causing a violent “wall” of water to push across the land. The severity of a flood depends not only on the sheer volume of water, but also on the land’s ability to absorb this water.

The most danger floods are flash floods, which are caused by a sudden, intense accumulation of water. Since there is a great deal of water collected in one area, flash flood waters tend to move very quickly and with a great deal of force, knocking people, cars and even houses out of its way.

Floods can occur anywhere with the right conditions, so be prepared!

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than half of all fatalities during floods are auto related, usually the result of drivers misjudging the depth of water on a road and the force of moving water. A car can float in just a few inches of water.
- 6” deep of water can knock a person over; 2’ deep can sweep away a vehicle.
- Rivers and streams can swell over their banks in as little as one hour.

Know the difference:

FLOOD WARNING

Significant flooding is expected within the next 48 hours. Loss of life or property is possible with this type of event.

FLOOD WATCH

The potential exists for flooding within the next 12 to 72 hours.

FLOOD ADVISORY

Flooding which is generally only an inconvenience (not life-threatening) to those living in the affected area. Advisories are issued when heavy rain will cause flooding of streets and low-lying places in urban areas. Also used if small rural or urban streams are expected to reach or exceed their banks.

Get Flood Insurance:

Consider the following facts:

- Flood losses are not covered under regular casualty insurance policies.
- Flooding is the only natural hazard for which the federal government provides insurance. FEMA manages the National Flood Insurance Program, which makes federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage.
- Flood insurance is available as a separate policy in most communities through insurance agents.
- There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance goes into effect, so don't delay.

Facts:

- The principal causes of floods in the State of Maine are snow melt and heavy rainfall.
- The May Day Flood of 2008 damaged 58 businesses in Aroostook County resulting in millions of dollars to the region.
- The Flood of 1987 caused over 400 small businesses to be impacted and over \$100 million in damages.



THINGS TO DO IN A FLOOD

- * Never drive or walk through flash flood waters.
- * If you cannot see the roadway, take a different route.
- * If you live in a flood prone area, monitor news broadcast frequently.
- * Move to higher ground immediately if water begins to rise.
- * Never go past an area that is roped off or blocked by police.

Total Number of Floods in the State of Maine from 1950 to 2010

