

DRIVER SAFETY TIPS FOR FLASH FLOODING



- Flash flooding is the leading weather-related killer in the United States.*
- More than 100 people are killed every year in flash floods. Half of the victims die trapped in their cars.**
- Some floods can take several hours or even days to develop, but a flash flood can hit in a matter of a few minutes, typically occurs in low-lying areas and is caused by intense rainfall from a thunderstorm or several thunderstorms.
- A Flood Watch means flooding is possible, you should stay alert and be prepared to evacuate.
- A Flood Warning means flooding is occurring or about to occur, the flood area should be immediately evacuated and those affected should go to higher ground.
- The need for action is most urgent in a flash flood because it happens so rapidly.
- Drivers should not be lulled into a sense of false security just because they are in a vehicle when flooding occurs.
- When water is running across a road, drivers should always turn around and choose a different route.
- If you're in a vehicle during a flash flood or if water is rising around it, all occupants should get out immediately and go to higher ground. Just six inches of water can cause tires to lose traction and slide; 12 inches will float many vehicles.
- Don't sit in the vehicle and let it fill up with water. Stay calm and unbuckle your seat belt. Open the door to get out as long as water is below the bottom of the door.
- If water is higher than the bottom of the door, don't open the door because it will let in water. Power windows don't stop working immediately, so you should be able to roll your window down and get out that way.
- Carrying a special hammer for breaking vehicle windows would be helpful in case windows can't be rolled down. Rear window may be best escape route since it's larger. A flashlight helps in the dark, especially if you're alone in an area with no streetlights.
- Do not touch, brush against or try to remove a live wire on your vehicle while exiting.
- Once outside the vehicle, go to higher ground. If there is no ground or structure nearby that is higher than the roof of your vehicle, consider climbing on to your vehicle's roof, especially to avoid being swept away by fast-moving water.
- Try to keep your cell phone dry and operational, so you can call 911 after escaping to higher ground.

*Federal Emergency Management Agency

**National Weather Service