

NEWS



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Office of the Managing Director
Richard Negrin, Esq., Managing Director

Liam O'Keefe, Deputy Managing Director
Managing Director's Office of Emergency Management

Contact: Joan Przybylowicz, 215-686-4474
Edward J. Vassallo, 215-439-3887

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For Immediate Release:

Flooding Happens: Get Prepared During Flood Safety Awareness Week

After the flooding in Philadelphia last week that closed roads and impacted several neighborhoods, Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 14 – 18, reinforces the notion that residents need to be prepared for these emergencies.

Not only is flooding the nation's most common natural disaster but Pennsylvania has the highest flooding rate of any state. According to the National Weather Service, flooding causes more deaths each year than any other severe weather related hazard because people underestimate the force and power of water. With the images from the earthquake in Japan of water carrying away cars and buildings, now is the time to realize the devastating effects that natural hazards can cause.

More than half of all flood-related deaths result from vehicles being swept downstream. Be prepared to take detours and adjust your route due to road closures if there is standing water. Flood water may be much deeper than it appears and as little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

In most cases, standard homeowner's insurance policies don't cover flood damages. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) makes flood insurance available to renters, homeowners and business owners throughout the nation. Flood coverage can be purchased for properties both in, and outside of, the highest risk areas but should be considered regardless of where you live since 20 percent of all flood insurance claims come from moderate-to-low-risk areas. To estimate how expensive a flood could be on your home, visit www.phila.gov/ready and click on The Cost of Flooding tool.

It's important to be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near water, or downstream from a dam. Even a very small stream or dry creek bed can overflow and create flooding, so follow these tips:

- Know your area's flood risk. To estimate your flood risk and flood insurance premium, visit www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-800-427-2419.
- Make an itemized list of personal property, including furnishings, clothing, and valuables.
- Fill out a Household Emergency Plan containing important contacts for you and your family in the event of any emergency. Templates can be found on www.phila.gov/ready.
- Sign up for ReadyNotifyPA, the region's emergency text and email alert system, by logging on to www.readynotifypa.org and find out first.
- Prepare a Go Bag that you can grab in case you need to evacuate your home in a hurry. Visit www.phila.gov/ready for a list of Go Bag items.
- Learn the safest route to higher ground from your home or place of business to safe in case you have to evacuate. This should be part of your Household Emergency Plan.
- If you live in a flood-susceptible area, keep materials, such as sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber, on hand to help protect your home.
- Do not attempt to cross flood waters. Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Never drive through flooded roadways. Just two feet of moving water can sweep an Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) off the road.
- Consider flood insurance. Protection against loss due to floods is not covered under most homeowner's insurance policies. Flood insurance is offered through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at www.floodsmart.gov or 1-800-427-2419.

For more flooding tips, such as how to recover from a flood, visit the Floods page of www.phila.gov/ready. Additional information on emergency preparedness, ReadyNotifyPA, or for a list of emergency supplies for a Shelter-in-Place Kit and Go Bag, visit www.phila.gov/ready or call 3-1-1.

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