

June 2008

Stay Safe in High Water

Wear an approved personal flotation device when working in or around water.

Do not walk in floodwaters.

Supervise children closely. Do not allow them near high water, storm drains or other water hazards.

Observe all hazard warnings on roads.

Take the recommended routes—do not try shortcuts.

Avoid areas subject to flash flooding such as gullies and creek beds—particularly during wet weather or thunderstorms.

Watch for flooding at low areas on the highway, bridges and overpasses.

Never drive a vehicle into water if you are not certain of the depth.

If the vehicle stalls in rising water, get out to safety, rather than attempting to restart it.

Never go sightseeing during a disaster. Stay away from floods and storms.

Avoid the waterfront during a hurricane because of the danger of storm surge. This high water caused by the wind is the greatest killer during hurricanes. The torrential rain of a hurricane can also trigger flash floods inland.

Floodwater is treacherous. The possibility of drowning is very real if you attempt to cross the water on foot or if you are caught in rising water while operating heavy equipment or an automobile.

Risk Services Notes

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

If you have never experienced a serious emergency in your workplace, you might find it hard to imagine such a thing could happen. However, every day in job settings just like yours, something goes seriously wrong.

It could be a fire, fatal injury, flood, earthquake, shooting, hurricane, tornado, chemical spill or another kind of crisis.

Whether everyone survives and escapes injury depends on how well they are prepared for an emergency.

How about you? Are you prepared to survive a workplace emergency? You should be receiving regular training and practice in dealing with the types of emergencies most likely to occur where you work.

The first survival tool is knowledge. You need to know what can go wrong. Are hazardous chemicals stored or transported near your workplace? Is your workplace an essential service or a high-profile setting that could be targeted by terrorists? Are you located in a tornado zone or a natural flood plain?

Second, you must know how to get out of the building and reach safety. Right now, can you point out two exits from your work area? Elevators don't count because you should not use them in any emergency. Do you know where you are to assemble with your fellow workers after an evacuation of the building? This is an important aspect of the emergency procedure because if you do not show up there, an emergency crew might have to risk injury looking for you. Evacuation procedures can be summed up as follows: Get out, go to a safe place and stay there.

Third, do you know what other duties you

are expected to perform in an emergency? You need to know how to call for help. Emergency phone numbers should be posted at each telephone in your workplace, along with the address and directions to your work area. Your responsibilities might include checking for stragglers and shutting doors as you leave, or assisting a fellow worker who uses a wheelchair.

You might also be assigned responsibility for shutting down equipment or chemical processes in an emergency. If you are supposed to fight fire, clean up hazardous chemicals or rescue victims, you will need special training and equipment.

The time to learn about these emergency procedures is now—not after something goes wrong. Your employer has developed a plan for the kinds of emergencies that can be reasonably expected. You need to find out your own part in the plan, learn how to do it and practice it. Also, make sure you find out who is in charge in an emergency. Should you be listening to your supervisor or to a security employee?

You should also be familiar with the various alarm sounds and lights in your workplace. Alarm systems typically have different signals for fire and intruder emergencies. There may also be specific alarms related to hazardous equipment, chemicals, gases and other hazards.

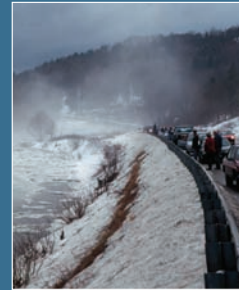
Do your best to plan for the worst—that's the basis of emergency preparedness. Please see the attached brochure titled, "Turn Around, Don't Drown," prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

THE STORY

"Flooding never happens here. Tom was trying to get home. He drives on the road near the stream every day. We knew it had been raining a lot, but it had been so dry, we were actually happy about the rain. Tom saw some water on the road, but thought it wasn't deep. And, after all, he was in a truck, high up off the ground. But then his truck started to float, and before he knew it, his truck was washed downstream with him in it. Fortunately, his truck got stuck on a rock or something, and someone saw him and threw him a line. Tom got out okay. But we really learned from this, not to drive in floods."

Testimony of Marilyn and Tom (last name withheld), interviewed by the American Red Cross after Tropical Storm Allison struck Texas in late June 2001.

For more information,
 contact your local National Weather Service Office
 or National Weather Service, Office of Climate,
 Water, and Weather Services
 1325 East-West Highway
 Silver Spring, MD 20910
<http://tadd.weather.gov>



This is an Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service Safety Message



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 National Weather Service

Partners

- American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Alliance for Safe Homes
- National Safety Council



TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN



THE PROBLEM

- Tom was fortunate. He was rescued and lived to tell his tale. But others did not fare as well. A man in Pennsylvania, who refused to abandon his home during an evacuation, later was swept away as he attempted to leave in his automobile.
- A man in Arlington, Texas, trying to prove to his friend the water he was crossing was safe enough to drive through, lost his life as he left his vehicle and attempted to wade to the other side.

These tragic events happen too often. Ironically, many drivers rescued from flood waters reported they were in a hurry to reach the safety of their home as a reason for attempting to cross a flooded road.

Automobile commercials advertising the ability to drive through water lead to a false sense of security at best and tragic consequences at worst.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that over one-half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters.

THE REASON

Where does the idea that "my heavy vehicle will keep me safe" come from? Perhaps from the false trust in the weight of the vehicle you drive.

Many believe their 3,000 pound or more vehicle will remain in contact with the road surface ... that it is too heavy to float. Think about that for a moment. Aircraft carriers weighing 97,000 tons float.



Vehicles (and ships) float because of buoyancy. In fact, most cars can be swept away in 18-24 inches of moving water. Trucks and SUVs do not fare much better with an additional 6-12 inches of clearance.

THE SOLUTION

The solution is simple. **Turn around, don't drown.** Stay out of flooded roadways. The water may be much deeper than it appears as the roadbed may be washed out. Also, respect the "road closed" barrier that may be posted to warn you of danger.

This solution applies to anyone attempting to walk or wade through flowing water. **As little as 6 inches of rapidly moving water can sweep you off your feet.**

Consider carefully where you camp and/or park your vehicle along a stream or wash, especially during threatening conditions.

Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

Finally, know when you are at risk! Keep abreast of the latest weather watches and warnings from the National Weather Service with the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards or through your favorite news source.

**FLOODING AHEAD
TURN AROUND
DON'T DROWN**

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and Standard Highway Signs (SHS) book contain provisions for this type of incident warning sign, including size of the legend, colors, and shape. State and local highway agencies should warn motorists of temporary flooding conditions by using signs such as this. For further information, both the MUTCD and SHS can be found at: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.

In addition to NWS watches and warnings, road condition information during adverse weather is widely available from State Departments of Transportation. This information can be found on websites or by phone. Go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/trafficinfo/index.htm> to get to this information online. Or, call 511 to get travel condition information. The 511 service is being deployed across the country to enable travelers to make better choices—choices of time, mode of transportation, or route.

FOR REAL TIME FORECASTS AND WARNINGS TO SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY, VISIT WWW.WEATHER.GOV.