



MONTHLY March 2019

Severe Weather Preparedness

Severe weather preparedness is essential for everyone. Severe storms strike quickly. Thunderstorms can produce heavy rain, strong winds, lightning, hail and tornadoes. Respond promptly to these threats posed by a storm in your area.

The National Weather Service, in cooperation with the broadcast media, will provide you with the warnings you need to quickly respond. If you listen to the media, you'll know when a storm is approaching your area and if you need to take protective action.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios are the best warning system for all kinds of emergencies, including severe storms. These inexpensive devices are recommended as the primary warning system for everyone and can be purchased through any electronics retailer.

Don't wait until an emergency siren sounds to start looking for flashlights and other things. Make sure the entire family knows where to go at home, at work, in school, at the mall or anywhere they might be when the storms strike. Know where you will take shelter.

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The changing of seasons often brings some drastic swings in weather across Pennsylvania. The transition from cold to warm triggers thunderstorms the spring months while heat and humidity can help build thunderstorms in the summer. Severe weather is possible at any point during the year, but spring marks the beginning of the "severe weather" season in Pennsylvania —a time when these types of storms typically become more frequent. Thunderstorms can produce hail, severe wind gusts, and even tornadoes anywhere within the borders of our Commonwealth. Plus, thunderstorms can

produce lightning and flooding hazards which are categorized on their own. Let's talk a little about what makes a storm severe and look at Pennsylvania's severe weather numbers.

What makes a storm severe?

There are three factors which make a thunderstorm severe:

- Wind Gusts of 58mph or faster
- Hail of 1" diameter or larger (quarter sized)
- A Tornado

Lightning and flooding are not requirements for a severe storm, even though they present a danger. By definition, you need lightning to have thunder, so it's technically present in every thunderstorm. But the unpredictability of lightning strikes allows for little alert time. Flooding from heavy rains in thunderstorms is a common hazard and is alerted separately.

Severe Weather Preparedness

Watches & Warnings



The National Weather Service (NWS) will issue a <u>Watch</u> when they expect favorable conditions to allow for severe thunderstorm development. Watches are usually issued for several counties for a period of 6-8 hours. You should prepare for severe weather by reviewing your family plan, securing loose objects outdoors, closing doors and windows, and monitoring weather forecasts. Always have a at least two methods to receive weather alerts.



The NWS will issue a **Warning** when thunderstorms are creating severe weather, either seen on radar or reported the by Warnings usually last less than one hour and cover a small area. A severe thunderstorm warning is issued when a storm contains damaging winds, hail, or the potential for a tornado. Tornado warnings are issued when a storm shows rotation on radar or a tornado is spotted. When a warning is issued, you should immediately take action! Seek shelter in the lowest, most central room and stay away from doors and windows. Don't delay, the storm

hazards may be seconds away from you.

American Red Cross Month

Every eight minutes, the American Red Cross brings help and hope to people in need, thanks to heroes like you. Whether you donate funds, donate blood or volunteer, the American Red Cross depends on your support to make a difference in communities across the country.

Each year, the president of the United States proclaims March "Red Cross Month." The American Red Cross uses this month as a chance to honor and celebrate the everyday heroes who help fulfill their mission. This March, you are encouraged to uncover your inner hero by:



American Red Cross

- **Giving Blood.** Blood donations can help save people's lives.
- Taking a Class. First Aid, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Automated External Defibrillator (AED), Babysitting, Lifeguard, to name a few.
- **Volunteering.** Helping displaced families, providing care and comfort to an ill or injured service member or veteran, or teaching others how to respond in emergencies.

For more information about the American Red Cross or to www.redcross.org.

To read more about American Red Cross Month or how to be a hero, go to: https://www.redcross.org/about-us/red-cross-month.html

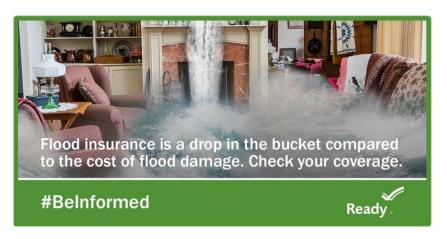


Be a hero today!

Flood Safety Awareness

Flood Safety Awareness Week - March 25-29, 2019

Many of us got up close and personal with flooding across the Commonwealth in 2018. Did you know Pennsylvania broke the annual statewide record for rainfall last year? Numerous heavy rain events pummeled the same areas, over and over again. Snowmelt and tropical systems bringing devastating flooding is more common for us, but last year we dealt with soggy soil and relentless rain that caused significant flooding damage to places which never dealt with flooding. So, it's important that **ALL** Pennsylvanians prepare for flooding, including investigating your flood insurance options (flooding is typically not covered by homeowner's insurance).



<u>What is a Flash Flood?</u> We saw more than we wanted with these in 2018. A flash flood is a rapid and extreme flow of high water into a normally dry area, or a rapid water level rise in a stream or creek above a predetermined flood level, beginning within six hours of the causative event (e.g., intense rainfall, dam failure, ice jam).

What is Urban & Small Stream Flooding? Flooding of small streams, streets, and low-lying areas, such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains. This type of flooding is mainly an inconvenience and is generally not life threatening, nor is it significantly damaging to property.

<u>River Flood:</u> The rise of a river to an elevation that the river overflows its natural banks, causing or threatening damage.



Now you know what makes a flood, so check out these Flood Safety Tips:



Always seek higher ground

- Evacuate when told before the flood reaches you if possible
- If you're trapped in your home, move to a higher floor/roof and signal for help

• If you evacuate, secure your home

- Disconnect or shut off utilities if possible
- If time allows, move important items to a higher floor

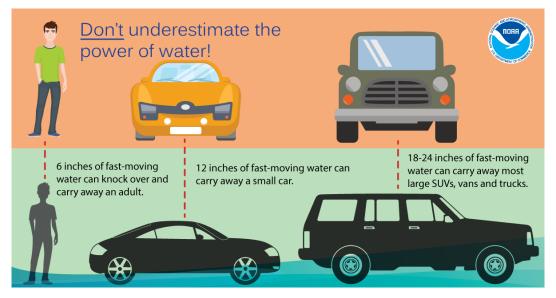
• When driving, never cross a flooded roadway - Turn Around, Don't Drown!

- The road may have washed away
- Cars float in a foot of water and can be swept away by two feet of moving water



• Never walk through flooded waters

- O A half foot of moving water can knock you off your feet
- Flood water dangers include drowning, wild animals, sewage, and bacteria
- Floodwaters can conduct electricity, so avoid any downed wires consider them energized and dangerous



PEMA is Social!

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Twitter

https://twitter.com/ReadyPA https://twitter.com/PEMAdirector

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA

PEMA Can Also be Found on the Web!

Be Informed, Be Prepared, and Be Involved!





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************ This Month's Preparedness Events

American Red Cross Month

(https://www.redcross.org/about-us/red-cross-month.html)

Flood Safety Awareness Week

(March 25th through March 29th) (https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood)

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: www.pema.pa.gov

ReadyPA: www.Ready.PA.gov SERVPA: www.Serv.PA.gov

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Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov Office of the State Fire Commissioner: www.osfc.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: www.dhs.pa.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Health: www.health.pa.gov

PA State Animal Response Team: www.pasart.us PA Department of Transportation: www.penndot.gov

PA511Connect: www.511pa.com

Pennsylvania State Police: www.psp.pa.gov

ACTION SHEET

Are you ReadyPA?



KNOW THE TERMS

Flood or Flash Flood Watches: A developing weather pattern suggests there is a *potential* for rapid flooding (flash flooding), more widespread areal flooding (gradual or prolonged), or river flooding. Stay tuned to local media to stay informed.

Flood or Flash Flood Warnings Flooding is *imminent or in progress*. The warning focuses on specific counties, communities, streams, or areas. Flash Flood Warnings are issued for flooding usually occurring within 6 hours of heavy rain.

KNOW ABOUT FLOOD INSURANCE

Flood insurance for your home or business can be a crucial protection should disaster strike. For information on flood insurance in Pennsylvania , go to the PA Insurance Department's one-stop shop flood insurance webpage at http://www.insurance.pa.gov/Coverage/Pages/Flood.aspx. For further information on flood insurance, go to www.floodsmart.gov. For information on flood recovery, go to http://www.ready.pa.gov/AfterAnEmergency/Recover%20And%20Rebuild/Documents/AfterTheFlood.pdf.

KNOW WHAT TO DO



Before A Flood

- Practice your family emergency plan. Plan and practice flood evacuation routes from home, work, and school that are on higher ground. www.ready.pa.gov/BePrepared/MakeaPlan
- Conduct a thorough home inventory. Thorough documentation of your belongings will help you file your flood insurance claim. For more information, visit http://www.ready.gov/insurance-vital records.



During A Flood

- **Go to higher ground**. Get out of areas subject to flooding, including dips, low spots, washes, etc.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially when water flows fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Never drive through flooded roadways. Roadbeds may be washed out under flood waters and just two feet of moving water can sweep an SUV off the road.



After A Flood

- Check for damage. Check for structural damage before re-entering your home. If you suspect damage to water, gas, electric, or sewer lines, contact authorities.
- Remove wet contents immediately. Wet carpeting, furniture, bedding and any other items holding moisture can develop mold within 24 to 48 hours. Clean and disinfect everything touched by floodwaters.
- Plan before you repair. Contact your local building inspections or planning office or your county clerk's office to get more information on local building requirements.
- File your flood insurance claim. Be sure to provide: the name of your insurance company, your policy number, and contact information. Take photos of any water in the house and damaged personal property. Make a detailed list of all damaged or lost items.

