



Flash Flooding Safety

The most important thing to know about flooding is what the difference is between a flood and a flash flood. **Flash floods** result from heavy localized rainfall from slow moving thunderstorms. This often occurs around small creeks and streams that overflow during the heavy rainfall. You may hear the terms **Flash Flood Watch** or **Flash Flood Warning**, here is the difference.

- **Flash Flood Watch** means conditions are favorable for heavy rains in a short amount of time that may lead to flooding.
- **Flash Flood Warning** means heavy rain is causing areas to flood quickly and you should seek shelter if it is near you.

The term **flood** refers to a long term event that is many times associated with general rains that last for several days. The rains eventually drain into rivers and streams and fill them with too much water. The flooding can actually develop after the rain has stopped. The term that used to warn you about this type of event is a **River Flood Warning**.

There are several safety rules that you can incorporate into your severe weather plan when it comes to flash flooding.

- Do not cross a flowing stream where the water is above your ankles. Moving water carries a tremendous amount of energy and you can be quickly swept off your feet.
- A similar rule applies when you are in a car. Never try to cross a water-filled roadway where the depth is not known. If you happen to get caught in an area of rising water and your vehicle stalls, leave it. The rising water may be powerful enough to sweep the vehicles and its occupant away.
- Be especially cautious at night. You often arrive upon a flood area without notice.
- Heavy rains are often channel into ditches and gullies and this can turn an area into a quick and fast rising stream of water in a matter of minutes. This means never camp on low ground next to these areas, since it could catch you off guard while your sleeping.