

March 21, 2016

Start of Spring Brings Greater Risk of Flooding in Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency is reminding citizens to practice flood safety during the start of the Spring weather.

“Flooding is the number one weather threat we face in Pennsylvania,” said PEMA Director Richard D. Flinn Jr. “People need to understand that just a few inches of water can knock over a person, and one to two feet of water can carry away most cars.”

Flinn also said it is important for the public to understand the difference between a flood watch and a flood warning because each represents a different level of action to be taken. National Flood Safety Awareness Week is March 21-25 and is a good opportunity for the public to learn more about flood safety.

- A flood watch means that flooding may occur. Residents should stay alert and watch rivers and streams, and be prepared to move to high ground quickly.
- A flood warning means that there is actual flooding. Residents should act at once and move to high ground.

In addition, citizens should:

- learn whether your property is above or below the flood stage water level and become familiar with the history of flooding for your region;
- learn flood-warning signs and your community alert signals to be better prepared for floods and flash floods; and
- install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent flood waters from backing up in sewer drains.

Plan and practice an evacuation route. Individuals living or working in flash flood areas should have several alternative routes for leaving and getting to higher ground.

Have disaster supplies on hand in your home, including:

- flashlights and extra batteries;
- portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries;
- first aid kit and manual;
- bottled water and non-perishable food;
- manual can opener;
- essential medicines/prescriptions; and
- cash, credit cards and important legal documents.

Develop an emergency communication plan in the event that family members are separated from one another during floods or flash floods - a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school - and have a plan for getting back together.

Free flood safety information, including templates for family emergency plans and checklists for emergency kit supplies, is available at www.ReadyPA.org. Follow @ReadyPA on Twitter and like ReadyPA on www.facebook.com/BeReadyPA for more emergency preparedness information. The free ReadyPA app is also available for both Apple and Android devices.

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