

News Release U.S Department of Homeland Security

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FEMA AND NOAA RENEW PARTNERSHIP TO ENCOURAGE FLOOD SAFETY

WASHINGTON – As one of the snowiest winter seasons in many years yields to warmer weather and the promise of rain and snowmelt, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) *FloodSmart* Campaign and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that they are again working together during Flood Safety Awareness Week (March 15-19) to raise awareness of the dangers associated with flooding and steps to protect against damage. Year in and year out, floods are the most common, costly and deadly severe weather related disaster in the U.S. NOAA will announce this year’s official spring flood outlook on March 16, and an unusually wet and snowy winter in many communities will likely increase the potential for spring flood events. Both agencies urge that important measures can—and should—be taken now to ensure safety and financial security, including obtaining flood insurance.

To help individuals better understand flood risks nationwide and steps that can be taken to protect lives and property, FEMA and NOAA have created an interactive “flood impact map” that features localized, searchable data about the scope and severity of flood events in recent years. The map is available at www.floodsmart.gov/noaa, and the new web page contains tips on what to do before, during and after a flood, and encourages flood insurance protection among other measures.

“It’s important that families take steps now to protect themselves and their homes against a potential flood,” said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. “These steps include developing a family communications plan, putting an emergency kit together, keeping important papers and valuables in a safe place, and investing in flood insurance. Most flood insurance policies take 30 days to become effective, so the time to take action is now.”

Floods do more than damage properties, they can also threaten lives if careful safety precautions are not followed in a flood event. More than half of all flood-related deaths occur in motor vehicles, prompting NOAA to stress motor safety in flood situations and adopt the slogan, “Turn Around, Don’t Drown!” Roadway flooding can be deceptively deep, and it only takes six inches of water to lose control of a vehicle. It is imperative that people use extreme caution when driving at night, when it is difficult to determine if a road is flooded. It is also important to avoid areas that you know are already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast.

“It floods somewhere in the United States or its territories nearly every day of the year, killing approximately 100 people on average and causing nearly \$7 billion in damages,” said Jack Hayes, Director of the National Weather Service.

“Awareness, preparedness and action are the key ingredients to protecting lives and property when floods threaten.”

To help community decision-makers and residents understand their risk, monitor threatening situations and take action when warranted, NOAA produces river and flood forecasts and warnings. Flood forecasts are available at www.weather.gov/water, and are also broadcast over [NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards](#).

FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program ensures communities across the country have access to affordable flood insurance. The program makes coverage available to renters, homeowners and business owners through approximately 85 insurance companies in more than 20,800 participating communities nationwide.

Flood coverage can be purchased for properties both in, and outside of, the highest-risk areas. A quarter of all flood insurance claims come from moderate-to-low-risk areas. In these areas, lower-cost Preferred Risk Policies can cost as little as \$119 a year. Individuals can learn more about seasonal flood risks and what to do to prepare by visiting FEMA’s [FloodSmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) Web site, or by calling 1-800-427-2419 or 1-800-427-2419.

For information on how to prepare for flooding and other emergencies, visit www.ready.gov.

FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth’s environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.