

Floods

New Mexico is most often faced with flash floods which can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries rocks, mud, and other debris and can sweep away most things in its path.

Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live, but especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even very small streams, arroyos, culverts, dry streambeds or low-lying ground that appears harmless in dry weather can flood. (**NM Family Emergency Preparedness Guide*)



NOTE: NEVER PLAY IN OR AROUND DITCHES OR ARROYOS! THEY COULD FLOOD EVEN IF IT IS NOT RAINING IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

Flood Definitions

Flood Watch: Flooding is possible.

Flash Flood Watch: Flash flooding is possible; prepare to move to higher ground.

Flood Warning: Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Flash Flood Warning: A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

Before a Flood

- Avoid building in a floodplain unless you elevate and reinforce your home.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- The smartest thing you can do to prepare for floods is purchase flood insurance. To find out more about flood insurance go to www.floodsmart.gov.

During a Flood

- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.
- If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.

After a Flood

Listen to the National Weather Service (NOAA) weather radio, battery-operated radio, or television for the latest emergency information. Use the telephone only for emergency calls. Stay away from damaged areas. If evacuated, return home only when authorities say it is safe.

Driving and Floods

The following items are important to remember when driving in flood conditions:

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possibly stalling the vehicle.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including SUVs and trucks.



FEMA National Flood Insurance Program

<https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance>