

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States, and Douglas County has had its share of destructive floods.

# Floods & Flash Floods

## Flood/Flash Flood Watches & Warnings What do they mean?

- **Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, television, and Social Media for information.
- **Flash Flood Watch:** Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, television, and Social Media for information
- **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

**Develop a family emergency plan** – Plan and practice a flood evacuation route from your home, work or school that takes you to higher ground. Make sure your family knows how to contact one another in the event of an emergency, and ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be your emergency family contact. (And don't forget to plan for your children (<https://www.ready.gov/plan>) and pets (<https://www.ready.gov/pets>).)

**Complete a Preparedness Kit (<https://www.ready.gov/kit>)** — Include a first aid kit, nonperishable food, bottled water, rubber boots, rubber gloves, NOAA Weather Radio, battery-powered AM/FM radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.

**Get flood insurance** – Flooding can cause significant damage to homes and businesses, so protect yourself from the financial risk by purchasing insurance. Flood insurance policies typically take 30 days before they take effect, so don't wait until it's too late. Visit [FloodSmart.gov](http://FloodSmart.gov) for more information on flood insurance.

**Safeguard your possessions** - Create a personal flood file containing an inventory of your possessions, important personal documents and a copy of your insurance policies. Keep it in a secure place, such as a safe deposit box or waterproof container. A great way to keep these files handy is to scan them on a scanner and store them on a USB flash drive or Secure Digital Card. Encryption with a free program will help ensure their security.

**Prepare your house** - Place the furnace, water heater, washer, dryer and electrical components on cement blocks at least 12 inches above the projected flood elevation. Also, make sure your sump pump is working and install a battery-operated backup, in case of a power failure.

For more information on Severe Weather Safety or Preparedness, contact Emergency Management — 111 East 11th Street, Unit 200 — (785) 832-5259 — [www.douglascountyks.org](http://www.douglascountyks.org) — Connect with us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/dgcoem](http://www.facebook.com/dgcoem) and Twitter: @dgcoem



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## What Can You Do?

- Know your flood risk and elevation above flood stage.
- Do your local streams or rivers flood easily? If so, be prepared to move to a place of safety. Know your evacuation routes.
- Keep your automobile fueled; if electric power is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.
- Keep first aid supplies on hand.
- Install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.

## During the Flood/Flash Flood Warning:

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Avoid areas subject to sudden flooding.
- If you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, STOP! Turn around and go another way.
- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Children should NEVER play around high water, storm drains, etc.
- **Continue monitoring NOAA Weather Radio, television, or emergency broadcast station for information.**



## Driving Tips: Turn Around, Don't Drown (<https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood-turn-around-dont-drown>)

Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are auto related! Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

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