

# FEMA Urges Residents to Listen to Local Officials About Flooding Risks as Storms Sweep the South and Midwest

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WASHINGTON -- Large storms and severe weather systems are moving across the South and Midwest, which are bringing heavy rain and risks of flooding. FEMA is coordinating with its state, local, tribal and territorial partners to ensure people's safety is prioritized.

Additionally, President Donald J. Trump has approved an emergency declaration for Tennessee, providing federal disaster assistance that allows FEMA to identify, mobilize and provide, at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency.

It is critical to listen to local authorities because they are the best source of information as weather impacts change and develop. There are several ways residents in affected areas can prepare to stay safe during these storms.

## **How to get information:**

- Do not rely on a single source of weather alert information. Instead, tune in to multiple information sources and set up your devices to receive warnings and alerts.
- Make a habit of checking weather conditions regularly. This includes TV news, radio, a weather app on your smartphone or an online weather service.
- The FEMA App is your personalized disaster resource. Within the app, you can receive real-time weather and emergency alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the country. It can also help you find a nearby shelter if you need to evacuate. It is available on iPhone or Android.

## **How to stay safe:**

- Evacuate immediately, if told to do so.



- When thunderstorms are in the area, stay alert for rapidly changing conditions. You may notice streams start to rise quickly and become muddy or hear a roaring sound upstream that may be a flood wave moving rapidly toward you. If you observe these things, head immediately for higher ground.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Flash flooding can develop in just minutes. If a flash flood warning is issued, it means a flash flood is imminent or occurring and you should take action. If you are in a flood prone area move immediately to high ground.
- Get to the highest level if trapped in a building. Only get on the roof as a last resort and once there, signal for help. Do not climb into a closed attic, as you could be trapped by rising floodwater.
- If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately (unless water is moving quickly) and move to higher ground. Rapidly rising water can engulf the vehicle and its occupants, sweeping them away.
- Many flood deaths occur from cars being swept downstream. It takes just 12 inches of rushing water to carry away most cars and just 2 feet of rushing water can carry away SUVs and trucks.
- Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.

#### **Information on keeping important documents safe:**

- Keeping important documents such as birth certificates, passports, drivers' licenses and Social Security cards in a safe place is important so they are accessible once disaster recovery starts. Take time now to safeguard these items to increase your peace of mind.
- Think about where to store important documents and valuables. If you have important items in your basement, you may want to consider moving them to a higher location and putting them in waterproof containers if possible.
- Consider storing electronic copies of important documents in a password-protected format on a removable flash or external hard drive.

To learn more about flood safety and preparedness, visit [Ready.gov/floods](https://www.ready.gov/floods) or [Listo.gov](https://www.listo.gov) in Spanish language.

