

# Emergency Preparedness Pointers

## Preparing for a Flood

Floods and flash floods are two of the most powerful forces in nature. Due to our recent years of drought conditions, many people do not realize the level of risk we face along the Boise River from serious flooding. With the construction of the Lucky Peak Dam in 1954, river flow has been controlled and determined by factors such as precipitation, runoff and the amount of water already contained in the reservoirs. Releases must be made to make room in the reservoirs for anticipated spring run-off. When the river flows increase, it's important to know what to do to protect your loved ones and your property from the effects of flooding.

Flash floods occur most often during the summer months and can be triggered by intense rainfall concentrated over certain types of terrain such as the Boise Foothills. This sudden downpour can quickly saturate the ground until it can hold no more. These floods often trigger mudslides that can carry large amounts of debris, destroying buildings, bridges or anything else in its path. Flash flooding is the number-one weather related killer in the U.S., taking as little as 6 inches of moving floodwater to knock an adult off of their feet and just 2 feet to float your car. *Never try to walk or drive through floodwaters.* Flash floods happen very quickly. You will not always have ample warning. Develop a plan *before* the flood.

### Assess Your Flood Risk

Is your home located in the 100 yr floodplain? How about the 500 yr floodplain? Is your home located near the mouth of one of the gulches of the Foothills? What is the history of flooding in your area? One way to find out is to call your local Planning & Zoning Office.



### Purchase a Tone-Activated Weather Alert Radio

The warning for a flash flood could be as little as 5 minutes. A tone-activated weather alert radio will instantly alert you of a Flash Flood Warning that has been issued by the National Weather Service. They can be purchased at any Radio Shack store.

### Purchase Flood Insurance

Most homeowner policies do not cover flood damage. Check with your insurance agent. There is normally a 30-day waiting period for flood policies to take effect.

### Develop an Evacuation Plan

Identify your evacuation route, including alternates, and know where you will go if you are told to evacuate. Consider what you will do if separated from other family members. Pick a place where you all can meet – somewhere out of the flood zone.

### Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

Your kit should contain those items that you may need during an evacuation or extended loss of utilities. Some basic items include a first aid kit, food & water, personal medications, battery operated radio for the latest storm information, flashlight & extra batteries and cash. Store your kit in an easy to carry container in a convenient, easily accessible place known to all family members.

### Practice your Plan

Make sure that your entire family knows your evacuation plan. Periodically review the plan with your family, including the location of your Disaster Supply Kit.

### Know the difference between a flood WATCH and a flood WARNING

- A **Flood WATCH**: flooding is possible in the area, be alert and stay tuned to the TV or radio for current information. Be prepared to evacuate to higher ground if so instructed.
- A **Flood WARNING**: a flood has been reported and is occurring or is imminent.
- If a **Flash Flood WARNING** is issued in your area, evacuate immediately. You must act quickly.

### When Sirens Sound.....Seek High Ground

Seven sirens were installed in the Boise Foothills to warn residents living in those areas of flash flooding. In the event of a flash flood emergency, the sirens will sound a steady, continuous tone for a minimum of 3 minutes. The sirens are tested at noon on the first Saturday of each month. During the test, they sound for approx. 15 seconds.