

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE Raleigh NC
800 AM EDT WED MAY 27 2009

...NORTH CAROLINA HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK...

This week has been declared North Carolina's Hurricane Preparedness Week for 2009. All week long the National Weather Service will be issuing informative messages to help you prepare for hurricane season.

Each day we will cover a different topic. Today we will talk about Inland flooding.

Inland flooding is the most serious and deadly threat hurricanes bring to inland areas of North Carolina. Most hurricane deaths over the past 30 years have been the result of inland flooding. During the past 30 year period more than half (59%) of all U.S. tropical cyclone deaths have occurred from inland freshwater flooding. Nearly 78 percent of all children killed by tropical cyclones drown in these floods. Around 80 percent of all flooding deaths have occurred in automobiles as people attempt to drive through flooded areas where water covers the road.

As we look back 10 years ago to Hurricane Floyd it is important to remember of the 56 people who perished...50 drowned due to inland flooding and most in automobiles. The NWS safety campaign Turn Around...Don't Drown is aimed at educating everyone about the dangers of driving into flood waters.

It is important to realize the amount of rain a hurricane produces is not related to the intensity of the wind. Weak hurricanes and even tropical storms have caused disastrous floods throughout history. For example in 2006... the remnants of Tropical Storm Alberto moved over central North Carolina dropping 4 to 8 inches of rain from Sanford to Raleigh. This resulted in major flooding along numerous creeks including Swift creek in Apex and Crabtree Creek in Raleigh.

So what can you do?

Anytime a hurricane or tropical storm threatens...think flooding. It is very important to determine if you live in an area at risk of flooding from heavy rainfall. If your yard or nearby road around your home floods during ordinary thunderstorms you are at serious risk of flooding from torrential tropical rainfall. Those living near creeks...streams and drainage ditches should also watch water levels closely. Remember, extreme rainfall events bring extreme flooding and during extreme events even those area which normally do not flood are at risk.

Always keep abreast of road conditions making sure your escape route is not becoming flooded by heavy rain. Never attempt to cross flowing water. As little as six inches of flowing may force your car off the road and downstream into deadly conditions.

Never allow children to play near creeks...stream or drainage ditches. As rain water runs off creeks...streams and ditches fill with running water that can easily sweep a child away.

Lastly...have an emergency action plan and know your homeowners and flood insurance policies. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policies.

NNNN