

Kittitas County Flood '09

Safety Update

Vehicles passing over flooded roadways

The reason that so many people drown during flooding is because few of them realize the incredible power of water. A mere six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult. It takes only two feet of rushing water to carry away most vehicles. This includes pickups and SUVs.

If you come to an area that is covered with water, you will not know the depth of the water or the condition of the ground under the water. This is especially true at night, when your vision is more limited.

Follow these safety rules:

- Monitor the NOAA Weather Radio, or your favorite news source for vital weather related information.
- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, canyons, washes etc.
- Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams.
- Road beds may be washed out under flood waters. NEVER drive through flooded roadways.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Do not exit your vehicle at any time when near or in floodwaters.

Personal Floatation Devices

We strongly encourage the public to stay out of the floodwaters. However, if you are trapped and have to travel through flood waters, be sure to don a personal floatation device per the manufacturer's specifications.

Electric Wires

- Downed Lines — If you see a power line on the ground, don't assume that it is insulated. Stay at least 10 feet away from the wire and secure the area to keep others away, too. Remember that electricity can pass from an energized source through a victim. If a rescuer touches the victim, the rescuer also can become a victim.
- Notify the Utility — Contact the local utility and have trained personnel respond to the scene. Never attempt to handle wires yourself unless you are properly trained and equipped.
- Protect Yourself — During any rescue attempt, never rely on rubber boots, raincoats, rubber gloves or ordinary wire cutters for protection from electricity. Don't touch (or allow your clothing to contact) a wire, victim or vehicle that may be energized.

First Aid

First Aid for any minor cut or scrape sustained during a flood needs to be seen to immediately. Immediately clean out the wound, disinfect it, and protect it from re-immersion into the floodwaters as soon as possible. Infections to cuts or open wounds from floodwaters can be very dangerous and occur all too commonly.

Brenda Larsen, Kittitas County Fire Marshal