

Severe Weather



Awareness Week

Flash Flood/Flood Safety

Missouri Flood vs Tornado Deaths

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Flood	9	2	3	3	0	7	1	27	2	9
Tornado	19	3	4	158	6	0	0	0	0	1

Flash flood/flood events have been a major weather killer in Missouri for many years, and 2017 was no different with 9 flood deaths. Only recently, and mainly due to 2011, has tornado deaths passed flood deaths over the past 10 years. But if you look at the table above, you will see that the flood related deaths have been very consistent, while tornado deaths tend to fluctuate quite a bit. The exception was 2015 when flood deaths soared to 27 due to several heavy rain events.

Many people do not realize the power of flowing water. Trees, buildings, automobiles, and people are easily swept away by flood waters.

Fact: Six inches of swiftly flowing can knock a person over.

Fact: Two feet of water will make most vehicles float.

Fact: Each foot of water exerts 500 pounds of force. If two feet of water hits a vehicle door, that is 1000 pounds of force and you cannot open the door. The result is people drown in their vehicle. Perhaps you can climb out a window. But even if you do, then you have to swim through rapidly flowing water which will be full of debris. People are usually trapped underwater by the debris and drown.

Over the years, many flash flood deaths have occurred at **LOW WATER CROSSINGS**. Low water crossings are roads that are built through small creeks and streams. As the name implies, during low water, you can usually drive through. However, when the water rises, especially when it rises quickly during flash flooding, low water crossings become **DEATH TRAPS**. Cars are easily swept downstream and often overturn, trapping the occupants inside. There is a very simple rule to follow when you encounter a flooded road in your vehicle. **Turn Around! Don't Drown!**

(TADD: <http://tadd.weather.gov>)

NEVER drive into a flooded area! Be especially cautious at night when darkness will often hide flood dangers. If you live in a flood prone area, have a plan of action in case

flooding strikes. Stay tuned to the latest weather developments and be ready to move quickly. Abandon personal property and move to higher ground.

Camping near small rivers in Missouri is very popular, but can also be very dangerous. There were two deaths in 1997 because of people camping along a river that flooded. Remember that heavy rain upstream may lead to serious flooding at your location with little or no warning. Avoid camping along small rivers or streams when heavy rain is in the forecast anywhere in the stream basin.

