



**May 16, 2008**

Contacts:

Monique Lay, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services  
(406) 841-3963

Mary Guokas, Montana Department of Natural Resources  
and Conservation

(406) 444-1343

FEMA Region VIII News Desk

(303) 235-4908

## **CITIZENS IN WESTERN MONTANA URGED TO PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE FLOODING THIS WEEKEND**

With temperatures expected to reach the mid-80s to low 90s and most river basins holding plentiful snowpack, residents across Western Montana should prepare for the possibility of flooding this weekend, according to state and federal emergency and disaster officials.

Threats of potential flooding are based on local observation as well as a sophisticated prediction service developed by the National Weather Service. The public may access these local flood predictions from [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov).

If a flooding event does occur residents should listen to local officials for information and guidance.

Before the threat of flooding becomes imminent, flood mitigation experts advise individuals to:

- Listen to the radio or television for information. A battery-powered radio ensures receiving information in the event of a power outage.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.
- Be aware of local evacuation routes.

To prepare for a flood, you should:

- Make sure downspouts carry water several feet from your house to a well-drained area.
- Examine, clean and test your sump pump, if you have one. Make sure the discharge hose carries the water several feet away from the house to a well-drained area.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Construct barriers (levees, beams, floodwalls) to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.

- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely.
- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.



Contact your local Emergency Services Office if you have questions or concerns.

Consumers may call 1-888-379-9531 (TTY: 800-427-5593) or visit [www.FloodSmart.gov](http://www.FloodSmart.gov) to learn about their potential flood risks, flood insurance and how to prepare for floods. Refer also to FEMA's Flood Maps, Insurance and Information site: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/info.shtm>. This site provides information on flood insurance, flood maps, and general flood information to include: how to prepare for a flood, and what to do during a flood to stay safe.

###