



Allegany County

Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALLEGANY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION AND GARRETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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UNUSUALLY HEAVY SNOWPACK AND RAINFALL COULD CAUSE FLOODING

CUMBERLAND, MD (March 12, 2010) – Because of the unusually high amount of snow that has fallen this winter, flooding is expected in the area in the days ahead. Garrett County Government Public Safety and Public Roads officials, in conjunction with Allegany County and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, have been taking appropriate steps to minimize the effects of flooding including:

- Organizing Damage Assessment Teams ready to be deployed to assess public infrastructure and individual residential and business damages;
- Preparing shelters for evacuation areas;
- Clearing drainage areas;
- Pre-staging swift-water rescue teams; and,
- Declaring a local State of Emergency in order to acquire outside resources.

Here are steps residents can take in advance to prepare for floods:

- Make sure your insurance policy covers flooding. Even renters are eligible for flood insurance. Contact a local insurance agent.
- Move furniture and valuables to higher floors as floodwater rise.
- Keep the car gas tank filled in case you need to evacuate.
- Follow the instructions given by emergency officials. If told to evacuate, do so!
- Listen to radio or television for information. Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery-back-up to receive warnings. Garrett County residents may also receive telephone messages from Garrett County's Reverse 9-1-1 System, which will give you specific instructions. Allegany County will continue to update local media sources to keep residents informed of current and pending conditions.
- Know your flood terms:

A Flash Flood or Flood Watch means that flash flooding or flooding is possible with the designated watch area. Citizens are advised to be alert.

A Flash Flood or Flood Warning means that flash flooding or flooding has been reported or is imminent and citizens are advised to take necessary precautions at once.

An Urban and Small Stream Advisory means that flooding of small streams, streets and low-lying areas such as railroad underpasses and urban storm drains is occurring.

If you receive a flash flood warning, you may have only seconds to take the following actions:

- Get out of the area subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, canyons and washes.
- Avoid already flooded and high or rapidly flowing areas. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CROSS FLOWING STREAMS.**
- If driving, be aware that the road bed may not be intact under flood waters. **TURN AROUND AND GO ANOTHER WAY! NEVER DRIVE TROUGH FLOODED ROADWAYS!**
- If the vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and its occupants and sweep them away. Remember, it is better to be wet than dead.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening weather conditions.
- If you come to a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, **STOP, TURN AROUND AND GO ANOTHER WAY!**

- To report damage from flooding in Garrett County, call the Garrett County Public Safety 24-hr. hotline at 301-334-4444.
- To report damage from flooding in Allegany County, call the Allegany County Department of Public Safety at 301-876-9155, extension 109.

For more information about flooding, a joint publication of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Red Cross is available. For a free copy of "Repairing Your Flooded Home," write FEMA Publications, P.O. Box 70274, Washington, DC 20024, or call 1-800-480-2520.

Additional information can be found on MEMA's web site at:
www.mema.state.md.us/MEMA/content_page.jsp?TOPICID=floods or at www.floodsmart.gov.

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