



For Immediate Release

March 17, 2015

Flood Safety Awareness Week 2015



Photo Captions: **Left:** Mississippi River crested at 48.03 feet on May 10, 2011, Greenbelt Park, Memphis. **Right:** Autos dodge flood waters on Walnut Grove, Memphis, January 3, 2015, during a “flash flood watch.”

Flooding is the number one natural disaster in the United States. Where it rains, it can flood. Flooding can also occur from snow melt or a levee breach. Shelby County has experienced both major flooding on May 10, 2011, during the “flood of the century,” and a flash flood emergency on September 11, 2014.

During **Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 15 – 21, 2015**, the Shelby County Office of Preparedness, in partnership with the National Weather Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, reminds citizens to learn flood safety rules. First, know the terms:

- **Flash Flood:** Sudden flooding developing within minutes or a few hours. Usually originates from back-to-back thunderstorms, but can occur from other sources.
- **Flash Flood Watch:** Conditions are favorable for flash flooding to occur. Be ready!
- **Flash Flood Warning:** Flash flooding is imminent or occurring. Move to higher ground! Never drive through flowing waters on roadways, instead, “turn around, don’t drown!”
- **Flash Flood Emergency:** Flash flooding is occurring in a highly populated area. Seek higher ground!
- **Flood Advisory:** Exercise caution. Be aware that major flooding may occur. Stay informed.
- **Flood Watch:** Conditions are favorable for major flooding. Prepare now!!
- **Flood Warning:** Major flooding is imminent or occurring. Take action! Go to higher ground!

How can you prepare?

- **Know your risks:** Just because you have not flooded in the past, does not mean you will not flood in the future. Visit the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) web site, www.floodsmart.gov, to assess your flooding risks. The NFIP will direct you to the most current flood maps and connect you with insurance agents to discuss flood insurance. Flooding is not covered by standard homeowners' insurance policies.
- **Get a Kit:** Create a portable disaster kit to sustain you and your pets for at least 7 days.
- **Make a Plan:** Meet with your family to plan where to go if flooding occurs. Learn where higher ground is located. Map alternative routes to and from work in case of flash flooding.
- **Stay Informed:** Have a NOAA all-hazards radio with a battery back-up and an ALERTFM with you at all times. Heed the flood watches and warnings.

Office of Preparedness Director Dale Lane said, "Shelby County remains under a "flood advisory" for the Mississippi River at Memphis. The river level on March 16 is 27.23 feet and predicted to rise to 32.5 feet by March 21. Our agency is in contact with the National Weather Service and we will continue to monitor this situation." Minor flood stage is 34 feet and major flood stage is 46 feet.

Please visit www.staysafeshelby.us and www.weather.gov for more flood safety information.



End of Release