



THE DOS AND
DON'TS DURING
FLOODS



AfriForum

What is a flood?

- A flood is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. It is the most common natural disaster in South Africa:
- Floods are the result of rain, coastal storms, storm surges and the overflow of dams and rivers and other water systems.
- Floods develop slowly or quickly. Flash floods can occur with no warning.
- Floods cause outages, disrupt transportation, damage buildings, and create landslides.
- If you fail to evacuate flooded areas, enter flood waters or remain after a flood has passed, it can result in injury or death.

What to do to stay safe during a flood:

- Know the flood risk of your area.
- Keep up to date with the weather service warnings: www.weathersa.co.za.
- If flash flooding is a risk in your area, monitor potential signs such as heavy rain.
- Learn and practice evacuation routes, shelter plans and flash flood response plans.
- Gather supplies in case you must leave immediately or if services are cut off. Keep each person's specific needs in mind, including medication, and don't forget the needs of your pets. Remember extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.
- Obtain flood insurance.
- Keep important documents in a waterproof container. Create password-protected digital copies.
- Protect your property: move valued items to higher levels; clean drains and gutters; install check valves; and consider getting a sump pump with a battery.

The best time to prepare is now!

If you are under a flood warning, find safe shelter AND remember the following survival tips:

- Listen to the radio, weather services or alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions (e.g., local WhatsApp groups or two-way radio systems).
- If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Depending on where you are, and the impact and warning time of flooding, go to the safe location that you have identified.
- Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters; rather turn around. Approximately 15 cm of fast-moving water can knock you down, and about 30 cm of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Never drive around barricades; local emergency responders use them to safely direct traffic away from flooded areas.
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water, stay inside the vehicle. If water is rising inside the vehicle, climb on top of the roof.
- Determine your best protection based on the type of flooding.
- If you are outside, move to higher ground. If you are trapped in a building, go to its highest level. Do not climb into a closed attic or room, as you may become trapped by rising floodwater. Only go out onto the roof of a building if it is necessary and signal for help.
- If you are in a safe place already, stay where you are.



Be safe after a flood by doing the following:

- Listen to authorities for information and instructions.
- Avoid driving, except in emergencies.
- Be aware that if floodwater went through your house, snakes and other animals may still be there. Therefore, wear heavy gloves and boots during clean-up.
- Avoid wading in floodwater that can contain dangerous debris and be contaminated. Underground or downed power lines can also charge the water electrically.
- Use generators or other gasoline-powered machinery **ONLY** outdoors and away from windows.
- Be aware of the risk of electrocution. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. When it is safe to do so, switch the electricity off to prevent electric shock before you continue with the work that must be done.



