

What to do Before, During, & After Flooding

If you have lived in Meigs County very long then you have most likely dealt with flooding in one way or another. If you look at some history of Meigs County, you will find that there has been some major flooding over the years. Many of our roads along the Ohio River, as well as creeks and streams, flood every year and sometimes multiple times in a year. This flooding causes everything from an inconvenience in finding a way around the water covered roadway to major damage to homes, property and even death. Floods are the most common disaster in Ohio as well as in the United States and can happen at any time of the year, sometimes with little or no warning.

The National Weather Service explains the difference between a flood watch and a flood warning:

Flood Watch- Issued when conditions are favorable for flooding.

Flood Warning- Issued when flooding is imminent or occurring.

Preparing for a flood: - Know your risk for flooding where you live.

- Sign up for weather alerts.
- Create a communications plan to be able to communicate with family and friends.
- Assemble an emergency kit with enough food, water, and medicine for at least 3 days.
- If you live in an area that is likely to flood, it may be worth it to purchase flood insurance as standard home insurance does not cover flooding.
- Prepare family/pets in case you must leave quickly or must spend several days stuck at home.
- Have electronic devices charged and have back-up batteries on hand.
- Leave your home if it is likely it will flood. Do not wait to be ordered to leave.

During a Flood: - Stay informed by listening to radio, television, weather radio or any means you have.

- Get to higher ground immediately if you are in a flood prone area.
- Obey evacuations orders. Disconnect utilities and appliances, if you have time.
- Practice electrical safety if water covers electrical outlets or cords are submerged, if you see sparks, hear buzzing, crackling, snapping, or popping noises—get out.
- Do not walk through flood waters as it only takes 6 inches of moving water to knock you off your feet. Move to higher ground and call 911 if possible if you are trapped by moving water.

- Do not drive into flooded roadways or around a barricade, **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!** Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide sharp objects, washed out road surfaces, electrical wires, chemicals, etc. 12 inches of water can float a car or small SUV and 18 inches of water can carry away small and larger vehicles.

After a Flood: - Pay attention to authorities for information and instructions. Return home only when authorities say it is safe.

- Stay informed with updated information on road conditions, water safety. Water may need to be boiled. Other utility companies' updates.
- Avoid wading in flood waters that could have toxins and chemicals and dangerous debris hidden under water.
- Be aware of the possibility of underground or downed power lines that can electrically charge the water. Verify that the electricity is turned off.
- Avoid driving through high water where the roadway could be collapsed or have other sharp objects or debris.
- Be aware that snakes or other animals could enter your home or other structures.
- Wear work gloves, protective clothing, boots and appropriate face coverings or masks to protect against mold, debris or contaminated water from human waste, oil, etc.
- Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machinery only outdoors away from a window with plenty of a ventilation.
- Avoid disaster areas. Your presence may interfere with emergency operations.
- Do not drive through water in areas that can force water into homes and businesses.

More information to help you take an active role in your safety can be found at <https://www.ready.gov/floods#prepare> and <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood>

Shawn Cunningham

Emergency Response Coordinator

