



Flood Control District of Maricopa County

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Turn Around; Don't Drown®: County Reminds Motorists to Avoid Flooded Washes June 15-19 is Flood Safety Awareness Week

PHOENIX, Ariz. (June 19, 2015) – Nearly 100 people nationwide drown every year in floods. Over half of those deaths occur in automobiles that are swept downstream.

“People often underestimate the force and power of water,” said Steve Gallardo, Maricopa County District 5 Supervisor. “Just a few inches of water on the road can cause your tires to lose contact with the pavement and for you to lose control of your car. Never drive across a flooded wash. When in doubt, wait it out, or find a safer route.”

Many drivers misjudge their ability to navigate flooded roads, putting too much stock in their “heavy” vehicles. In reality, cars, and even SUVs, can be swept off the road in 18-24 inches of moving water.

“During a flood, water levels and how fast the water is flowing can quickly change,” said Bill Wiley, Chief Engineer and General Manager of the Flood Control District of Maricopa County. “If you see water suddenly flowing across a road, stop and wait until it is safe before crossing.”

Follow these tips to stay safe this monsoon season:

- Never drive through flooded washes or around a barricade.
 - Fast flowing water can float a car downstream and the roadbed may be washed out under the floodwaters.
 - Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide many hazards (i.e. sharp objects, electrical wires, open manholes, chemicals, etc).
- Do not walk through floodwaters. It only takes six inches of moving water to knock you off your feet.
- Be especially cautious at night. Flood dangers are much more difficult to see in the dark.
- Do not camp or park a vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.
- Many popular recreation spots are located alongside creeks and rivers. Avoid these areas during storms and don't return until the weather is cleared and the area is dry. Be especially careful in areas that were recently burned. Even areas that are not traditionally flood-prone are at risk due to changes to the landscape caused by wildfire.
- Check road closure information at <http://www.mcdot.maricopa.gov>.

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) was created in 1959 to reduce the risk of flooding to people and property.

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