

Executive Summary

2013 Flood Awareness

and

Public Risk Survey



Flood Control District of Maricopa County

Prepared by:

Creative Consumer Research

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1399.041

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Research Objectives

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County set out to **understand** how aware Maricopa County residents are regarding **flood control issues**, how effective **outreach efforts** are and how to convey a more **effective message** going forward.

Research Methodology

The Flood Control District partnered with Creative Consumer Research (CCR) and **conducted 1,012 telephone surveys** with Maricopa County residents. The surveys were 13 minutes, on average, and conducted from August 22 through October 1, 2013. Residents were told at the beginning of the survey that the Flood Control District was sponsoring the survey. All participants lived in one of the pre-designated zip codes provided by the Flood Control District, were at least 18 years of age, and were the head of household.

Demographics

The sample of residents that were interviewed **reflected the County demographics** by age, gender, ethnicity, according to the latest Census information. In general, respondents surveyed were white (62%), in their late forties (average age 47 years), and have an average household income right at \$63,000.

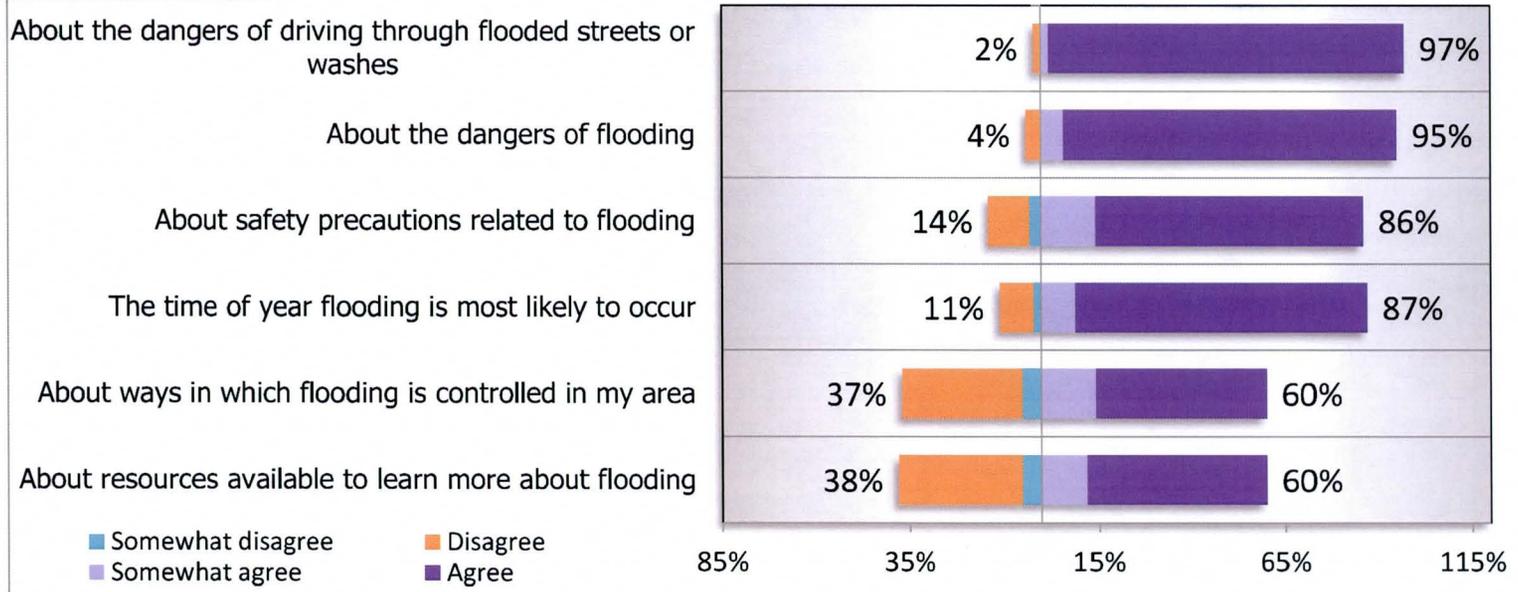
Key Finding

Residents of Maricopa County **understand the seriousness** of flooding; however, there are still some misconceptions regarding the Flood Control District, flood insurance and whether flooding could happen to them.

Flood Risk Awareness

*Maricopa County residents have a **strong awareness of flood-related risks**. At least 95% know about the dangers of flooding overall and dangers of driving through flooded streets. However, they are less aware of flood control measures and resources available to them to learn more about flooding.*

Residents Know...

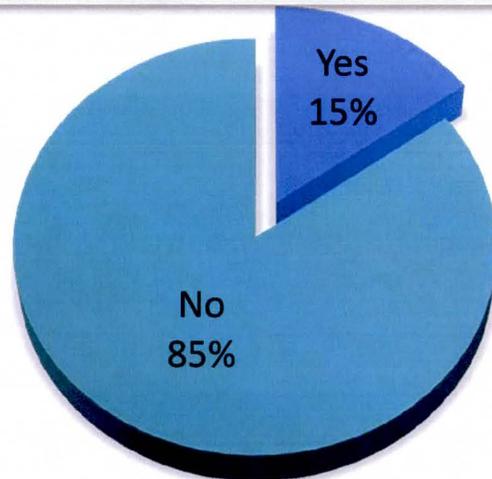


Flood Risk Awareness

Most residents (76%) in Maricopa County **expect flash flooding** to occur in the next year. But, they do not feel this is a new problem. They believe flooding problems have remained consistent or decreased over the last decade (48% state flooding problems have remained constant).



Believe Residence at Risk of Being Flooded



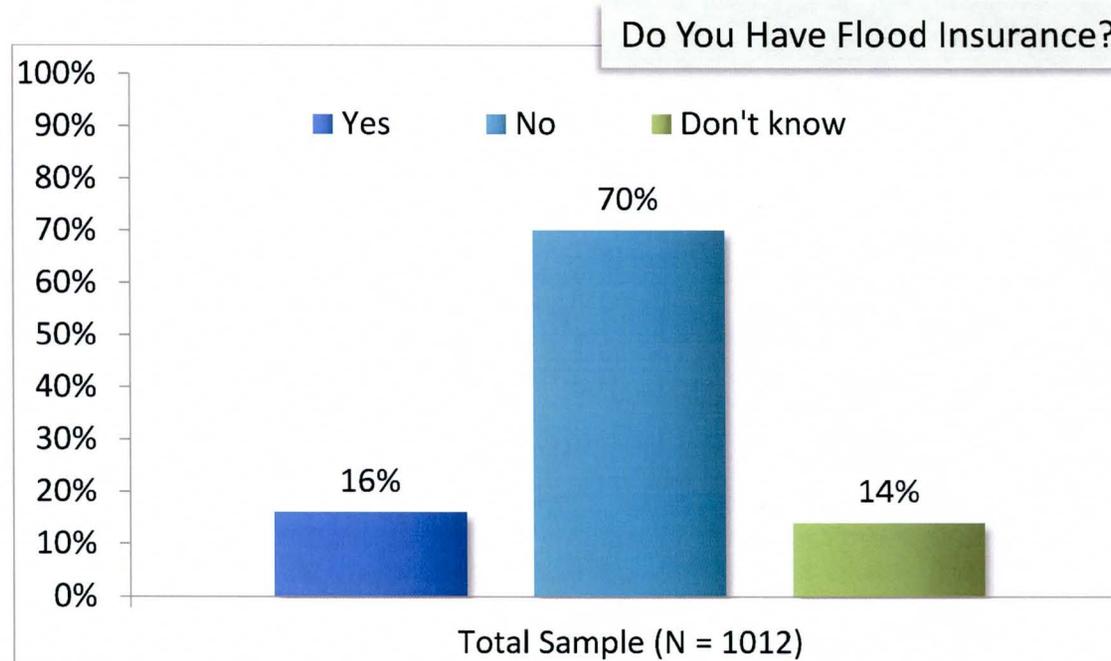
Total Sample (N = 1,012)

Although many expect flooding in the county to occur, a majority (85%) believe their own residence is not in danger of flooding. This perception appears to be creating **some complacency** when it comes to preparedness.

About half (52%) are unaware as to whether they live in the 100-year flood zone and approximately 2/3 of residents are unaware of the availability of Federally-backed flood insurance. And 20% believe that flood damage is covered under their homeowner's insurance.

Flooding and Their Residence

*Since many are unaware of Federally-backed flood insurance and do not expect flooding at their residence, it is not surprising that **70% do not carry flood insurance**. However, many (55%) do realize that flood insurance is not a part of their homeowner's or renter's insurance coverage. The challenge for the Flood Control District is how to effectively educate residents regarding the availability and necessity of flood insurance.*



Flooding Experience

*Of the total sample, about half (54%) have been in a vehicle when the streets have flooded. Although **most react appropriately to flooded streets**, there are still a few that do not fully comprehend the potential dangers of flooded streets and washes and about 1/5 (17%) have driven into the flooded street.*



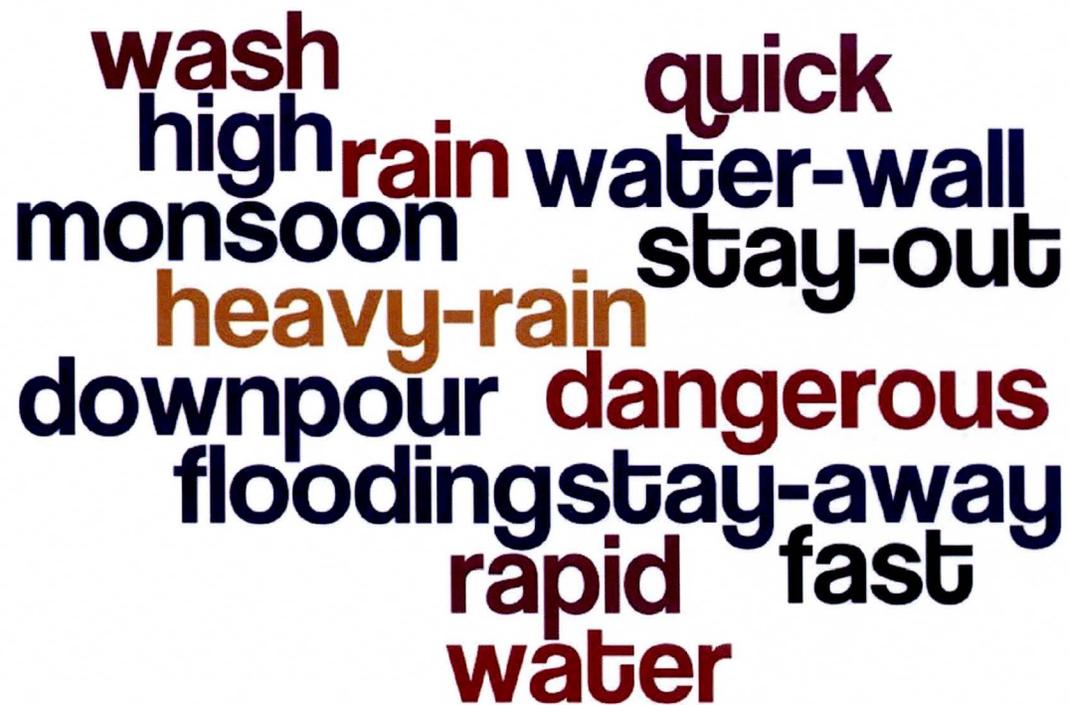
*Most do not have a real reason for driving into the street other than they did not foresee that it would cause a problem. Actually, few of the 1,012 residents interviewed have experienced flood damage at their home, only 50 or 5%. Of these, a majority, 36 residents, have actually **taken preventative action to prevent future damage**.*

*This is notable because although residents have greater experience with flooded streets than flooded homes, **once residents experience flood damage at home, they seem more apt to perform preventative measures on their home**. For most (20 of 36 residents) that meant adding to their drainage system.*

Word Associations

Residents appear to have a **clear perception of the term 'flash flooding'**. When asked to name the first thing that comes to mind upon hearing 'flash flooding', residents have connotations of 'danger' and excessive 'water'. Specifically, 15% said water, 11% said danger/dangerous, and 9% said as rain/heavy rain, downpour. Other associations are below.

First Words that Come to Mind When Hear 'Flash Flooding'

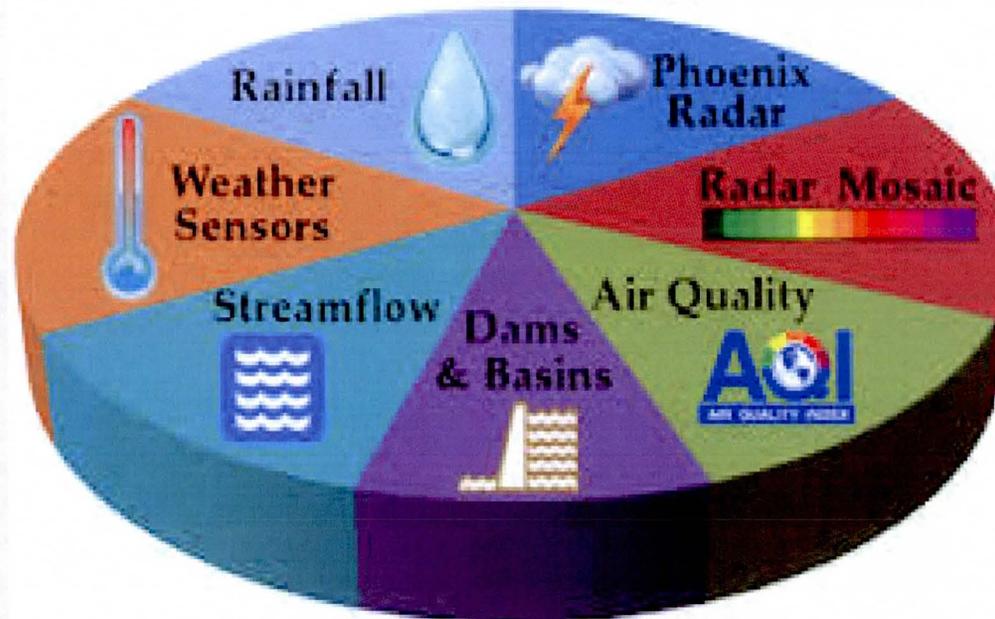


A word cloud of associations for 'flash flooding'. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with 'water' at the bottom center and 'wash' at the top left. The words are in various colors: dark red, dark blue, and brown. The words are: wash, quick, high, rain, water-wall, monsoon, stay-out, heavy-rain, downpour, dangerous, flooding, stay-away, rapid, fast, water.

Word Associations

On the other hand, as clear as resident's perception of the term flash flooding is, there is a less unified perception when it comes to the Flood Control District. This **unclear perception** also suggests they do not have a clear understanding of what the Flood Control District does. When asked the first word that comes to mind when they heard 'Flood Control District of Maricopa County', the top responses are None/Don't know (21%) and Not heard of/Not familiar (9%). Other responses are torn between whether or not it is an effective government agency. This presents an opportunity for the Flood Control District to connect with the community in order to raise awareness of the resources the FCDMC offers.

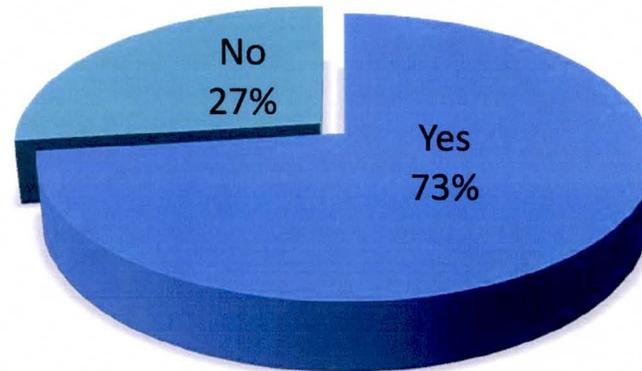
What Is the Flood Control District of Maricopa County?



Message Recall

Throughout the survey it is evident that the community hears loud and clear the message to not drive into flooded water. The best example of this is the **strong ad recall** for the tested vehicle ad. Most (73%) recall seeing an ad depicting a vehicle driving into a flooded street regarding a vehicle driving into a flooded street.

Recall Seeing Ad of Vehicle Driving into Flooded Street



Total Sample (N = 1012)

In addition, across all media, the ad messages recalled most are 'stay out of flood waters' and being warned or alerted to possible flooding. Residents **recall similar messages regardless of where they saw or heard an ad**. Most (87%) report that the messages are understandable. All of this is meaningful because it suggests the Flood Control District is on the right track and should reinforce the flooding messages.

Preferred Communication

Residents rely upon different communication methods, but **three methods, television, radio, and social media** appear to be the most used, most preferred, and the ones they are most likely to turn to for information in times of emergency. Television continues to be the most effective way to communicate with residents regarding warnings (82% learn about flash flood dangers via news reports/television). But the Flood Control District will undoubtedly need to **utilize multiple channels**, which should include radio and social media. When it comes to flooding risks/potential, residents prefer to be warned via television (67% highly prefer). Radio (43%) followed by Social Media (35%) are the other ways they would like to be warned about flooding risks. Residents are mostly likely to look for flooding information during heavy storms via television (67%), radio (40%), and social media (39%) first.



Recommendations

*The Flood Control District of Maricopa County's effort to communicate the dangers and risks associated with flooding is successful. Residents reported strong awareness of the risks, ad recall, and message recall; however, this awareness is only partially translating into actions. They understand the imminent dangers of driving into flooded streets, but are not taking the next step of purchasing flood insurance. Residents are more likely to take preventative measures once they personally experienced flooding at their home. In order to **build upon this success**, FCDMC should consider the following:*

- ***Maintain awareness** levels by continuing to communicate with residents regarding flood dangers and risks;*
- ***Communicate the need to have flood** insurance by translating their high awareness of flood risk and the availability of Federally-backed insurance into the preventative action of obtaining flood insurance;*
- ***Increase awareness of what the Flood Control District does** and what resources it has available to the community;*
- ***Use a variety of methods to communicate**, but concentrate message delivery through television such as public service announcements and news reports, radio, and social media.*