Flash Floods & Flood Safety

Flash floods and floods are the number one weather related killer with around 140 deaths recorded in the U.S. each year. 80% of flood deaths occur in vehicles, and most happen when drivers make a single, fatal mistake - trying to navigate through flood waters.

Streams in and on the edge of the Colorado Rockies are vulnerable to extreme flash flooding. Flooding can ensue quickly when intense thunderstorms produce heavy rainfall in the mountains. The steep mountain slopes and narrow canyons funnel the storm runoff into small creeks and dry ravines, turning them into raging torrents of water. Flash flood waves, moving at incredible speeds, can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and scour out new channels. Walls of water can reach heights of 10 to 20 feet.

Watch for the following signs

- Unusually hard rain over several hours
- Steady substantial rain over several days
- Rains in conjunction with a spring thaw
- A monsoon or other tropical system affecting your area
- A weather report
- Water rising rapidly in streams and rivers

Flash Flood Safety Tips in or Near the Mountains

- Check the weather forecast before venturing into the outdoors.
- When in the backcountry, make sure relatives/friends know where you are and when you plan to return.
- **DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOODED AREAS!** Even if it looks shallow enough to cross. Water only a foot deep can displace a 1500 lb. vehicle! 24" of water can easily carry most automobiles! Roads concealed by water may not be intact.
- If the vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground.
- Don't try to outrace a flood on foot. Climb to safety! If a flash flood is catching you during a hike or in camp, climb to higher ground as fast as you can.
- Stay away from streambeds and other drainage channels during and after rainstorms or when heavy rain is possible. If you are by a stream and the water begins rising rapidly, treat the situation as a flash flood. Mountain streams can rise several feet or more in just a few minutes.
- Be especially cautious at night. It's harder to recognize water danger then.
- Do not camp along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions. A flash flood can catch you while you are sleeping. Locate your camp on ground that is significantly higher than the stream or canyon.
- Stay tuned to what the weather is doing upstream. Rain upstream, perhaps many miles away, can roar down a canyon and catch you completely by surprise.

Watches and Warnings

The National Weather Service will issue a:

- **Flash Flood Watch** when heavy rains may result in flash flooding in a specific area. In this case you should be alert and prepare for the possibility of a flood emergency, which will require immediate action.
- **Flash Flood Warning** will be issued when flash flooding is occurring or is imminent in a specified area. If your locale is placed under a warning, you should move to safe ground immediately.

Battery Collection & Recycling

**New Procedures**

Battery collection buckets have been removed from public areas. Please hold on to your batteries from now until May 11, when collection will resume at the front desk collection spots.

Starting May 11, batteries will be collected at the front desks in ML, FL2, CG1, CG4. All batteries must have the ends taped with clear tape, or must be placed in individual plastic bags, in order to reduce fire hazards from the possibility of batteries short circuiting when rubbing against each other in transit.

Watch for additional details and Web resources on the new battery collection procedure.

For more information, contact Milenda Powers at x8625, mpowers@ucar.edu

**Upcoming Safety Classes:**

- **06-02-2009**
  - **Fire Extinguisher** 10:00am - 12:00pm  CG3 Lobby
  - **CPR Recertification** 1:00pm - 5:00pm CG3 Lobby

- **06-04-2009**
  - **Workplace Harassment Awareness** 10:00am - 12:00pm CG1-2126

- **06-11-2009**
  - **Hazard Communication Safety class** 9:00am - 10:30am Jeffco Conference Room
  - **Confined Space Safety Workshop** 10:30am -11:30am Jeffco Conference Room

- **08-27-2009**
  - **Back Safety** 1:30pm - 3:30pm ML Chapman Room

**Register @:**

HR website: [www.fin.ucar.edu/hr/staff_dev/index.html](http://www.fin.ucar.edu/hr/staff_dev/index.html)

or by calling Kate Pohl x8715.

Safety Committee:

- **ACD/ESSL** Denise Montzka x1868
- **CISL/IMAGE** Joan Fisher x1207
- **F&A** Matt Pinter x2522
- **MMM/COMET** Charlie Knight x8940
- **UOP** Milenda Powers x8625
- **Security** J.D. Wellard x1139
- **UOP/FL2** Ellen Martinez x8686
- **DIR/Library/ASP/CCB** Cindy Worster x1101
- **HAO/ESSL** Don Kolinski x1548
- **PPS** Dave Maddy x1134
- **SaSS** Elizabeth Kriete x8556
- **EOL/TIMES** Brad Lindseth x8742
- **E&O** Karen Smith-Herman x2590
- **HR** Cyd Perrone x8710
- **RAL** Inger Gallo x8403
- **SaSS** Bob Wiley x8554
- **CGD/ESSL** Adam Phillips x1726
- **F&A** Kelly Box x8558
- **RAF/EOL** Bob Olson x1071
- **SaSS** Steve Sadler x8550
- **SaSS** Anna Vasilyeva x2409

Comments, questions, suggestions may be directed to Bob Wiley @ x8554 or rwiley@ucar.edu