



“Currents” March 2017

Be Flood Aware

Whether you are a life-long Kerr County resident or an occasional visitor to our area, understanding your flood risk and being connected to emergency warnings is essential. Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters, but our area is particularly vulnerable to them. The unique geographic and atmospheric conditions of Central Texas have given our region the distinction of the most flash flood prone area in the United States. Texas is positioned to receive rain from hurricanes as well as from storms related to large air masses moving across the state. These storms have dumped ten, twenty, even thirty inches of rain during a very short time and sent water rushing through our rivers and streams.

The majority of flood related deaths are caused by people attempting to drive through moving water. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, water 1 foot deep typically exerts 500 pounds of lateral force on a vehicle. Six inches of water can be enough to stall a vehicle and most cars will float and be swept away in about 12 to 24 inches of moving water. Trucks and SUVs only provide an additional 6 to 12 inches of clearance. Creeks and rivers can rise very rapidly and the road bottom can also wash away making the water much deeper and more treacherous than it appears. Once cars are swept downstream, they will often roll to one side or flip over trapping the occupants inside.

In Kerr County, it is difficult to drive anywhere without passing over a bridge or low water crossing. These areas can quickly become covered in water during severe rain events, so stay aware and be cautious by paying attention to the weather and road conditions. Plan out safer, alternate routes and obey “road closed” signs. The best advice is to never drive through flood waters of unknown depth. Heed what the National Weather Service has campaigned for years: "Turn around, don't drown!"

Be aware of the flood warning resources available to you including local radio, law enforcement, alerts from the National Weather Service, NOAA weather radio broadcasts (frequency 162.45 MHz), and alerts from the CodeRED emergency notification system. Kerr County is a CodeRED community. If you are a resident, subscribe to CodeRED for free, through the Kerr County Sheriff's Office (<http://www.co.kerr.tx.us/eservices/>). You will receive emergency warning calls on your landline or cell phone directly from the Sheriff's Office. You can also download the CodeRED mobile app to receive free emergency and community warnings.

UGRA in conjunction with Kerr County and the City of Kerrville recently released an additional flood awareness resource for our community. The “Be Flood Aware” video can be accessed at www.ugra.org and is an educational tool appropriate for all ages to remind us of the danger of flash floods and how to protect yourself and your family from these dangers. Please contact UGRA if you would like to schedule a presentation of the video to your group.

Whether we are in a drought or receiving consistent rainfall, we must not forget the lethal dangers of flash floods which can occur at any time. For more information on flooding in Texas including preparedness and safety information, visit the National Weather Service webpage: <http://www.floodsafety.noaa.gov/>

Let's Keep Our River Clean

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