

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POINTER

From Mountain Snow to River

March is Severe Weather Awareness Month, and it's a good reminder that extreme weather is considered one of the greatest potential causes of natural disasters in Ada County and throughout Idaho. Spring and summer months can bring a variety of severe weather threats to Ada County. One of the most common weather hazards in the spring is when snow melts and it moves into rivers that bring the water to many valley areas. Mountain runoff is managed by reservoirs, rivers, and creeks usually without any flooding issues. Several weather related factors can influence snowmelt flooding.

Hazards of Snowmelt

Widespread rain during the snowmelt will warm up the snowpack and increase the flow to rivers and streams. The combination of rain and snowmelt can cause flash flooding. Snowmelt rates are normally similar to a light to moderate rainfall. However, a sudden warming trend with night time temperatures above freezing can create much higher melt rates. In addition to flooding, rapid snowmelt can cause landslides, debris flows, and contribute to ice jams.

If you find yourself in an area that is experiencing flooding, follow these National Weather Service recommendations:

- ⇒ Do not allow children to play near high water, storm drains, or ditches.
- ⇒ Never drive on a flooded road. Turn Around Don't Drown!
- ⇒ Move to higher ground and stay away from flood prone areas.
- ⇒ Be cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

To learn more about flood hazards, visit the [flood page](#) on our website.

SNOWMELT AND FLOODING



Heavy rain and snow is common during the spring months in the mountains and along the U.S. West Coast. All that water leads to cold, fast-moving, dangerous rivers.

WEATHER-READY TIP

Never attempt to cross a flooded road on foot or in a vehicle. Remember, the water in rivers can remain dangerously cold, even if the air temperature is hot.

weather.gov 

Steps to Prepare

- ⇒ Have a NOAA Weather Alert Radio at home and as part of your travel equipment. It can alert you to many emergency conditions.
- ⇒ Plan more than one evacuation route out of your neighborhood or any outdoor location that you will be visiting. Find the fastest way to high ground that will not force you to cross the flood waters.
- ⇒ Have a means of communication with you. A cell phone, CB or HAM radio could save your life or the lives of those downstream. Immediately alert authorities once you have witnessed a flash flood. Be prepared to give the time and location of the event as exactly as possible.
- ⇒ Keep a 72 hour kit in your home and take it with you when you travel. Having three days food and water could save your life if you become isolated by flooding.

