



# MONSOONS & FLASH FLOODING



## *the local scoop*

**MONSOON SEASON** in New Mexico starts in June and lasts through mid-September. It is characterized by **HEAVY DOWNPOURS** that last from five minutes to an hour. Such precipitation can create **FLASH FLOODS** that generally follow defined drainages and watersheds. Floods are often exacerbated by **WILDFIRES**, which leave the ground unable to absorb water, thus creating ideal conditions for flooding and mud-flow. Flood risk remains high until vegetation is restored—up to five years after a wildfire.

Localized, stormwater flooding also occurs throughout the County. Urban storm drainpipes and pump stations have a finite capacity. When rainfall exceeds this capacity, or the system is clogged, water accumulates in the street until it reaches a level of overland release.

### **LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE OCCURRENCES:** High.

Localized stormwater and flash floods occur frequently during periods of heavy rains. Los Alamos County has a **29 PERCENT** chance of flash flooding occurring in a given year.

### **BEFORE:**

- Know your flood risk—visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).
- Consider purchasing flood insurance.
- Build or restock your **EMERGENCY KIT**, including a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first-aid supplies.
- Make a **FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN** in case your family is not together when the flooding occurs. Decide how you will contact one another and how you will get back together.
- Familiarize yourself with **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANS**. Know where to go and how to get there should you need to get to higher ground, the highest level of a building, or to evacuate.
- Avoid camping or parking along streams, rivers, and creeks during heavy rainfall. These areas can **FLOOD QUICKLY** and with little warning.
- Bring in outdoor furniture, and move important indoor items to the **HIGHEST POSSIBLE FLOOR**; this will help protect them from flood damage.
- **DISCONNECT** electrical appliances.

### **DURING:**

- **TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!** Flash floods are the No. 1 cause of weather-related deaths in the United States.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters—just **SIX INCHES** of moving water can knock you down, and **TWO FEET** of water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Move immediately to **HIGHER GROUND**.
- **EVACUATE** if directed.
- If floodwaters rise around your car but the water is not moving, **ABANDON THE CAR** and move to higher ground. Do not leave the car and enter moving water.
- Do not touch **ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT** if you are wet or standing

in water. You could be electrocuted.

- If instructed by local officials, turn off your **GAS AND ELECTRICITY** as the main switch or valve. This helps prevent fires and explosions.
- Stay tuned to **LOCAL MEDIA** about weather updates, emergency instructions, and evacuation orders.

#### **AFTER:**

- Return **HOME** only when authorities say it is safe
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded, and **WATCH OUT FOR DEBRIS**. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways.

- Do not attempt to drive through areas that are **STILL FLOODED**.
- Avoid standing water, as it might be **ELECTRICALLY CHARGED** from underground or drowned power lines.
- **PHOTOGRAPH** damage to your property for insurance purposes.
- Stay tuned to **LOCAL MEDIA** about weather updates, emergency instructions, and evacuation orders.

