

...NORTH CAROLINA HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK...

This week has been declared North Carolina's Hurricane Preparedness Week for 2010. All week long the National Weather Service will issue informative messages to help you prepare for hurricane season.

Each day we will cover a different topic. Today we will talk about inland flooding.

Inland flooding is the most deadly and serious threat hurricanes bring to inland areas of North Carolina. The most devastating storm in our state's history was Hurricane Floyd which generated record flooding across much of eastern North Carolina claiming 56 lives...leaving thousands homeless and entire towns under water. Most hurricane deaths over the past 30 years have been the result of flooding. During the past 30 years nearly 60 percent of all U.S. tropical cyclone deaths have occurred from inland freshwater flooding. Nearly 78 percent of all children killed by tropical cyclones drown in these floods. Around 80 percent of all flooding deaths have occurred in automobiles as people attempt to drive through flooded areas where water covers the road. The NWS safety campaign Turn Around...Don't Drown is aimed at educating everyone about the dangers of driving into flood waters.

It is important to realize the amount of rain a tropical system produces is not related to the intensity of the wind. Weak hurricanes and even tropical storms have caused disastrous floods throughout history. For example in 2006... the remnants of Tropical Storm Alberto moved over central North Carolina dropping 4 to 8 inches of rain from Sanford to Raleigh. This resulted in major flooding along numerous creeks including Swift Creek in Apex and Crabtree Creek in Raleigh.

So what can you do?

Anytime a hurricane or tropical storm threatens...think flooding. It is very important to determine if you live in an area at risk of flooding. If your yard or nearby roads around your home flood during ordinary thunderstorms you are at serious risk of flooding from torrential tropical rainfall. Those living near creeks...streams and drainage ditches should also watch water levels closely. Remember, extreme rainfall events bring extreme flooding typically not experienced in the past. During extreme events even those area which normally do not flood are at risk.

Always keep abreast of road conditions making sure your escape route is not becoming flooded by heavy rain. Never attempt to cross flowing water. As little as six inches of flowing water may force your car off the road and downstream into deadly conditions.

Never allow children to play near streams...creeks or drainage ditches. As rain water runs off streams...creeks and ditches fill with running water that can easily sweep a child away.

Lastly...have an emergency action plan and know your homeowners and flood insurance policies. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance. Do not make assumptions. Check your policies.

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