

**Alicia Tate-Nadeau**  
**Director**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 9, 2021

**CONTACT:**  
[Rebecca.B.Clark@Illinois.gov](mailto:Rebecca.B.Clark@Illinois.gov)

## **IEMA Highlights Flood Safety Awareness Week**

SPRINGFIELD -- Nearly every day, flooding happens somewhere in the United States. Flooding can cause more damage in the United States than any other weather-related event and is also one of America's most underrated killers, causing nearly 90 fatalities per year. As part of Severe Weather Preparedness Month, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and local emergency management officials are reminding residents that good preparation and knowing what to do in a flood can increase chances of survival when flooding occurs in your area.

"More than 2.1 million Illinoisans are all too familiar with the devastating effects of flooding, and some communities are still rebuilding following the historic 2019 flood," said IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. "Flood Safety Awareness Week serves as a timely reminder for Illinois residents to prepare for potential spring flooding. Be aware of the flood risks in your community and know the steps to take to keep your family safe in the event of an emergency."

### **Flood preparedness tips include:**

- **STAY INFORMED:** Learn things you can do now to stay safe from [flooding](#) due to large storms. It's important to stay informed about what is happening with the storm as it approaches and always follow the instructions of local emergency management officials. NOAA Weather Alert Radios provide critical information in a timely manner on storms, hazards and emergencies.
- **TAKE PHOTOS:** If you have contents coverage on your flood insurance policy and you haven't already done so, take photos of clothing, flooring, light fixtures, appliances, furniture, etc.--anything that could be damaged by the flood. Having this can help if you need to file a flood insurance claim later. If you're not sure what your flood insurance policy covers, call your insurance agent.

- REDUCE FLOODING RISKS:
  - Make sure your sump pump is working. Then, install a battery-operated backup in case of power failure.
  - Install a water alarm that will let you know if water is accumulating in your basement.
  - Clear debris from gutters and downspouts.
  - Raise and anchor service equipment and appliances (air conditioning units, water heaters, heat pumps, water meters) onto platforms so they are at least one foot above potential flood waters.
- PROTECT VALUABLE DOCUMENTS: Store copies of irreplaceable documents (such as birth certificates, passports, insurance documents, deeds, etc.) in a safe, dry place. It can also be a good idea to photograph these documents and store the images in a safe place, too.
- PREPARE YOUR FAMILY: Develop a family emergency plan and review it with all family members. Visit [Ready.Illinois.gov](http://Ready.Illinois.gov) for step by step instructions on how to prepare for, survive and rebuild after any storm or emergency.
- BE READY TO EVACUATE: Plan and practice a flood [evacuation](#) route. Ask someone out of state to be your “family contact” in an emergency, and make sure everyone knows the contact’s address and phone number.
- PLAN FOR PETS AND ANIMALS: Make a [pet and animal plan](#). Many shelters do not allow pets. Make plans now on what to do with your pets if you are required to evacuate your residence.
- CHECK YOUR INSURANCE COVERAGE: A [flood insurance policy](#) could protect you from the devastating expenses caused by flooding. Standard homeowners’ insurance does not cover flood damage. A flood policy takes 30 days to go into effect from application to payment, so taking action before a storm is recommended. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) protects policyholders financially even if they live in an area that did not qualify for federal disaster assistance. In fact, statistics show, insured survivors are able to recover quicker and more fully from a flood or other catastrophic event than their uninsured neighbors.

Another important safety tip during a flood is, “Turn Around, Don’t Drown,” which is intended to remind people to never drive on a flooded road. Most flood-related fatalities involve people in vehicles attempting to drive through a road covered with water. The speed and depth of the water is not always obvious, and as little as two feet of rushing water can sweep away most vehicles, including trucks and SUVs.

For more information about flood preparedness, visit the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).

###