

## **Turn Around, Don't Drown**

by KI5UAJ

Tonight's training came up because of the recent rains that have visited and will continue in our area.

The topic is Turn around and don't Drown. The ground is dry and compact, and water just runs off it right now. I have obtained materials for tonight's training from various sources to include NOAA radio services. I will repeat the phrase Turn around and don't Drown several times during this training.

During a thunderstorm, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other storm related hazard. Why? The main reason is people underestimate the force and power of water.

Most flash floods are caused by slow moving thunderstorms, thunderstorms that move repeatedly over the same area or heavy rains from tropical storms and hurricanes. These floods can develop within minutes or hours depending on the intensity and duration of the rain, the topography, soil conditions and ground cover. Flash floods can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and scour out new channels. Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more. Furthermore, flash flood-producing rains can also trigger catastrophic mud slides.

Occasionally, floating debris or ice can accumulate at a natural or man-made obstruction and restrict the flow of water. Water held back by the ice jam or debris dam can cause flooding upstream. Subsequent flash flooding can occur downstream if the obstruction should suddenly release.

Many of the deaths occur in automobiles as they are swept downstream. Most of these deaths are preventable but too many people continue to drive around the barriers that warn you the road is flooded or drive into water of unknown depth.

For example, six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock you off your feet. People also become trapped in their homes by the rising water. A foot of water will cause many vehicles to float.

Whether you are driving or walking, if you come to a flooded road, Turn Around Don't Drown. You will not know the depth of the water, nor will you know the condition of the road under the water.

Follow these safety rules:

Monitor the NOAA Weather Radio, or your favorite news source for vital weather-related information.

If flooding occurs, get to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, canyons, washes etc.

Avoid areas already flooded, especially if the water is flowing fast. Do not attempt to cross flowing streams. Turn Around Don't Drown .

Roadbeds may be washed out under flood waters. NEVER drive through flooded roadways. Turn Around Don't Drown. If your vehicle is suddenly caught in rising water, leave it immediately and seek higher ground.

Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams and washes, particularly during threatening conditions.

Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

If you must evacuate your home, secure your home and if possible, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances.

Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you must walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters should rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.

National Weather Service data also shows:

- Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are vehicle-related,
- Most victims are males, and
- Flood deaths affect all age groups.

Think about it next time the barricades are up and you see the high water. Do not risk your life. Find a safe route home.

Play it smart, play it safe. Whether driving or walking, any time you come to a flooded road, TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!

From the home state side of this. The Texas Department of Transportation is strongly encouraging drivers to “Turn Around, Don’t Drown” and avoid driving over any roads that are covered with water. As the forecast calls for more scattered showers, flooding could continue to impact many of the state’s roadways. It is imperative drivers heed all warnings and NEVER drive around barricades or crossroads that are either closed or submerged with water.

Flash flooding is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in Texas.

For those that insist into the rushing waters, disobeying a warning sign or driving around a barricade is punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000, up to 180 days in jail, or both. You are not only risking your life but the life of a first responder coming to save you.

This concludes tonight’s training. This is KI5UAJ back to net control.