



Kiowa County Health Department

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## **OSDH Provides Tips to Avoid Injury From Flooded Areas**

As storm season approaches the state, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) reminds residents that flooding can cause fatalities and serious injuries for people who are trapped or swept away by wading in, or driving through floodwaters.

During storms with high levels of rainfall, OSDH encourages Oklahomans to evacuate flood prone areas before flooding begins. An evacuation plan should consist of multiple escape routes in case roads are blocked. Evacuation plans should also take into account people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, pets and even livestock.

When evacuation is not possible or when driving during heavy rains, it is important to remember not to enter flooded areas, or even areas with only inches of moving water. The depth of water is not always obvious, and the surface underneath the water may be washed out. Hazards in floodwaters often consist of rocks, mud, debris, oil, gasoline and even sewage. Remember to 'turn around, don't drown.'

Flood damage can lead to a number of public health issues. OSDH recommends the following tips:

- Listen for news reports to learn whether a community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Have wells checked for contamination from bacteria and chemicals.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage, bacteria and chemicals. Professional services and/or guidance may be necessary before attempting to repair flood-damaged property.
- Throw out any food, including canned items, which was not maintained at a proper temperature or has been exposed to floodwaters. Do not eat food from a flooded garden.
- Remove and replace any drywall or other paneling which has been underwater. Mold growth in hidden places is a significant health hazard.

Officials also recommend keeping an emergency kit to have ready for evacuation. Keep supplies such as snacks, a change of clothes, prescription medicine, medical equipment, important documents, pet supplies and valuable items such as family photos and irreplaceable mementos.

OSDH released videos in English, Spanish and American Sign Language to ensure the message of preparedness is available to various populations. To access these videos, visit the [OSDH YouTube](#) channel and select the Preparedness playlist. For more information about preparing for floods, storms or other natural disasters, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

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