

Flood Safety Awareness Week

March 16 – 20, 2009



Floods are consistently the most common, costly and deadly natural disaster Americans face each year. This year FloodSmart is partnering with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) during Flood Safety Awareness Week (March 16-20) to educate Americans about how floods occur nationwide and what residents can do to safeguard their lives and property.

We ask you to assist in this effort by reaching out to your customers and/or community members now to communicate their increased flood risk and encourage them to protect themselves with flood insurance, which will reduce their chances of financial losses should flooding occur.

To better help you communicate the flood risk to your customers and/or community members, access the Flood Safety Awareness Week landing page FloodSmart.gov/noaafloodweek to obtain important information about the week's announcements and events, download tools for consumers and follow links to other related sites. The cornerstone of the landing page will be an interactive map showing the scope and magnitude of U.S. flooding, including flood events that may have occurred in your community or nearby. The map will highlight these events and their numerous causes – from hurricanes and mudflows, to spring snow melt and flash floods.

For those in the Midwest, Flood Awareness Week comes at a time when flood risks are heightened due to spring snowmelt, ice jam, heavy rains and flash flooding. The results of each risk are the same: severe flooding and financial hardship.

It is critical that you reach out to your customers and/or community members now as flooding is top of mind and there is still time to act. Remind them of their increased flood risk and encourage them to protect themselves with a flood insurance policy – remember that once the policy is purchased, there is typically a 30-day waiting period for it to become effective. The talking points below can help you initiate a conversation about flood insurance.

Flooding is always a major concern, and especially for the Midwest in the spring.

- Melting of heavy snowpack from the past winter can overwhelm local rivers and streams, stress levees and increase the flood threat throughout the spring and well into summer.
- Because of the heavy snows this winter, the risk of flood is higher than it has been in several years.
- Just a few inches of water can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage.

This is the time to consider your risk and purchase flood insurance.

- Most homeowners insurance does not cover floods.
- Only flood insurance financially protects your home and your personal property from floods.
- Flood insurance compensates policyholders for all covered losses, and as opposed to a disaster loan, there is no payback requirement.
- The average flood insurance premium is approximately \$500 a year.
- Once purchased, there is typically a 30-day waiting period for the policy to become effective.

You can purchase flood insurance no matter what your flood risk is.

- You can purchase flood insurance as long as your community participates in the NFIP.
- You are eligible for flood insurance if your house has been flooded before, and you can purchase it even if your mortgage doesn't require it.
- Twenty to 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from low- to moderate-risk areas.

You may be eligible for a lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy if you live in a low- or moderate-risk area.

- For just \$119 a year, you can purchase a minimum of \$20,000 building and \$8,000 contents coverage for your home.
- Business owners can purchase \$50,000 building coverage and \$50,000 contents coverage (per building) for just \$550 per year.

Please email us at info@femafloodsmart.gov with any questions about NFIP, FloodSmart and our agent programs.