

Emergency Preparedness

Preparing in advance of a disaster takes a little work, but it can make a big difference. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has helpful information about emergency preparedness available on [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov). The most common disasters in this region are flooding and tornadoes.

The number one weather-related cause of death in Texas is flash flooding. Most flash flood victims fall into two categories:

- Motorists trying to cross a low flooded area
- Children or young adults playing around flood waters



During storm events in the Kemah area, Jarbo Bayou is prone to rapid changes in elevations. Elevation and rainfall totals are updated regularly on Harris County flood Control site.

Flash Floods



- Flash flooding most frequently occurs across Texas from late afternoon into the early morning hours, when it is too dark to clearly see the danger. Even in the daytime, a flash flood is deceptive because light is “bent” as it travels through water, making the water appear to be shallow when it is really dangerously deep.
- Because we look at flooding from the side or the bank, we judge the speed of the water from the edge of the flow, another dangerous misconception. The water on the outside of the flow is traveling slower because of the friction along the banks that slows it down.
- Flooding may also hide damage to a roadway or bridge crossing and large holes or even mini-canyons could be hidden beneath a street.
- Cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles (SUV’s) are especially vulnerable in flash floods, even if they have four-wheel drive. For every foot water rises, it can displace 1,500 pounds of automobile. As little as two feet of flooding will float most cars, and with electric windows and door locks, cars become death traps when passengers cannot get out due to electrical failures.

- Never try to walk, swim or drive through swift water. Avoid flooded roads, streets, bridges and low water areas. If your vehicle stalls in deep water, you can try to move to higher ground, but you may not be able to do so safely. There are usually air pockets at the very top of the roof of the car and you may be able to survive for a short period.
- Always stay informed about the weather by listening to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for the latest flash flood watches and warnings.
 - Flash Flood Watch – watch out and be alert.
 - Flash Flood Warning – flooding reported, take immediate safety precautions.
- If you have even the slightest doubt about the “look” of a flood area – STOP! Turn around and go back. Your car, truck or SUV is not designed as a white-water river raft – don’t try to make it perform like one.
- The Division of Emergency Management warns people not to drive through high water or in flooded areas. When water begins to run curb deep in the streets, beware of flash flooding. As little as six inches of fast moving water can knock you off your feet and as little as one foot can cause a compact car to lose control and float away.
- Don’t be a statistic in the next round of flash floods. Pay attention to the warnings and do not take chances.

Tornadoes At Home

- Texas has more tornadoes than any other state in the country.
- If you are home when a tornado strikes, go to the innermost part of your house on the lowest floor (such as a bathroom or closet with no windows). Remember to cover and protect your head.

Tornadoes on the Road



Tornadoes can pop up quickly here in Texas. If you are driving during a thunderstorm, be aware that more severe weather could be around the corner.

If you are on the road and see a tornado, leave your car immediately. Do not try to drive away from the storm.

If you have time, get inside a building. If there is no time to find shelter, lie flat in a ditch or ravine and cover your head with your arms. Do not take cover under the car.

Tornado Watch or Warning?

- You should also know the difference between a tornado watch and a tornado warning.
- A tornado watch means, “watch” the sky. Weather conditions are right for tornadoes to form.
- A tornado warning indicates a tornado has been sighted or identified on radar. Take cover immediately!