



**American
Red Cross**

News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross Offers Critical Flood Safety Steps to Follow As Wisconsin Rivers Rise *Turn Around, Don't Drown*

Eau Claire, WI... (July 13, 2016) River levels are rising in throughout Wisconsin counties with road closures in multiple counties. The American Red Cross has critical safety steps everyone should follow to help stay safe before, during and after flooding in your community.

Safety steps people should follow.

- People living in communities threatened by flooding should keep informed about weather conditions and listen to the advice of local officials.
- Follow evacuation orders and do not attempt to return to affected areas until officials say it is safe to do so.
- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flowing stream where water is above your ankles, stop, turn around and go another way.
- **Turn around, don't drown.** Most cars can be swept away by less than two feet of moving water.
- If driving, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground. Keep children out of the water.
- Be especially cautious at night when it's harder to see flood danger.
- If you are able to go home, look for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, cracks in the foundation or other damage before you enter your home.
- During cleanup, wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots.
- Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into your home with the floodwater.
- If you smell natural or propane gas or hear a hissing noise, leave immediately and call the fire department.
- If power lines are down outside your home, do not step in puddles or standing water.
- Materials such as cleaning products, paint, batteries, contaminated fuel and damaged fuel containers are hazardous. Check with local authorities for assistance with disposal to avoid risk.
- Make sure your food and water are safe. Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater, including canned goods, water bottles, plastic utensils and baby bottle nipples. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Contact your local or state public health department to see if your water supply might be contaminated. You may need to boil or treat it before use. Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula.

If residents have flood related damage and need American Red Cross assistance, they should call **800-236-8680 or 877-618-6628**. Local Red Cross workers will meet with the individuals and/or families to help them begin the clean-up and recovery process. It begins with giving them someone to talk to; help in figuring out what comes next, what community resources are available and may include immediate funds to help jumpstart their recovery.

FLOODING SAFETY STEPS Everyone should know the difference between a flood watch and warning. A flood or flash flood watch means either is possible in your area. A warning means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon.

People should download the free [Red Cross Emergency App](#) to have safety information and shelter locations at their fingertips. It also features emergency weather alerts to help keep the user safe, and provides information about what to do in case of various disasters. Red Cross apps are available in smartphone app stores by searching for the American Red Cross or going to redcross.org/apps.

Everyone should also get their household ready now and build an [emergency kit](#), which should include three days of supplies for everyone in the household. Contents for every kit should include water (one gallon per person per day), nonperishable food, a flashlight, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra batteries, a first aid kit, a 7-day supply of medications, a multi-purpose tool, sanitation and personal hygiene items and copies of important personal documents. The Red Cross also recommends having at least two weeks worth of supplies at home.

PLEASE HELP NOW The Red Cross is helping people affected by the recent tornadoes and flooding and will be helping for weeks and months to come, while at the same time responding to other emergencies, including helping people whose homes are destroyed by fires. The Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters each year in the United States – the vast majority of which are home fires.

People can help by donating to Red Cross Disaster Relief to support disasters big and small by visiting redcross.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or texting the word REDCROSS to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.