

Flood Awareness Month – PODCAST 13: Three Steps

RUN TIME: 3 MIN, 59 SECONDS

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STEFANIE: I'm Stefanie Bond, with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

LUCINDA: I'm Lucinda Robertson, with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

STEFANIE: And we're here to talk to you today about preparing for a flood.

LUCINDA: Yes.

STEFANIE: Governor Branstad has proclaimed March as Flood Awareness Month in Iowa. And for the third year in a row, the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division has teamed up with the Iowa Insurance Division, the National Weather Service, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to educate Iowans about how to ready themselves and protect themselves in the event of a flood. And as part of Flood Awareness Month, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management would like to stress that there are three simple steps Iowans can take to protect themselves and their families before a flood or disaster occurs.

LUCINDA: The first step people can take is to learn about the flood risk in their communities. As we all know, flooding is one of the hazards that can affect us at this time of year. It's important to be aware of what's happening in our own communities. You can tune in to your local TV and radio stations, and even news sources on the Internet, to find out about weather conditions and to receive instructions or any special actions that you may be asked to take, such as evacuating. Have a NOAA weather radio in your home and at your place of business. NOAA weather radios broadcast official weather warnings, watches, forecasts, and other hazard information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And these radios can even be programmed to pick up warnings and watches for your area only – and to alert you to current weather conditions. And NOAA weather radios can be purchased at many retail outlets.

Step two in being prepared is to work with your family members and put together a family emergency plan. The first thing you can do is to choose a family contact. Members of your family may not be together when an emergency happens, so knowing what to do, where you will go, and how to get in touch with your family members is important. Choose an out-of-town relative or friend to be a contact point for all your family members – and if you get separated you can call that person. And make sure everyone knows who that contact person is and has their email address and phone number. Another good thing to do is to make sure that all family members have that information with them at all times in their wallet or purse, or for students, put that information in their backpack. Another important part of making your emergency plan is to make an evacuation plan because you may be asked to leave your community. Contact your local emergency management agency to learn about your community's emergency plan, the location of shelters and hospitals, and evacuation routes. Don't forget to make plans for your pets because most shelters don't accept pets. Prepare a list of kennels, friends and family members who may be able to take care of your pet in an emergency. If you're taking your pet to a shelter that accepts them, the pet must have a current vaccination record, a pet carrier, and a supply of food. And make plans to ensure the needs can be met of those who are elderly or dependant on life-sustaining or health-related equipment, such as a ventilator or respirator.

The third step in being prepared for an emergency is to put together an emergency kit. If you need to evacuate, you're probably not going to have much time. So have an emergency supply kit ready to go. Assemble the kit and put it in a place that everyone in your family knows. You might even assemble a second kit and keep it in your car. So if you have to leave your home due to flooding, it's possible you may not be able to return for several days. Some items you want to consider putting in your kit are copies of important documents, like your drivers' licenses, insurance policies, and other financial information such as bank account numbers. Prescription medications, if possible. Special needs medical equipment. If you have little ones – diapers and formula. You'll want to take extra clothing and bedding for family members. It's possible you may need money, so include some in your kit. And don't forget hygiene items. You can learn more about being aware, making a plan, and putting together a kit at [W-W-W, dot be ready, dot iowa, dot gov](http://www.be-ready.iowa.gov).

STEFANIE: That's great information, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: I think so!