



On the Water Front

July 2017 | A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO

Be alert during flash floods

Summer rain irrigates our lawns and helps replenish our aquifers, but El Paso's weather changes quickly. Rain from a brief storm can fill streets within minutes. A storm in the foothills can send water crashing through channels and arroyos. And shallow water can sweep a car away. Our stormwater safety campaigns are created to caution drivers and pedestrians to stay safe.



Each summer, we partner with the El Paso Fire Department, the National Weather Service, the El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 and the Drowning Prevention Coalition to remind the community to be alert during the monsoon season. Our campaigns stress the importance of avoiding flooded areas with the phrase coined by the National Weather Service: Turn around don't drown. Our new tagline, "Life changes in a flash," is a reminder of how quickly stormwater fills streets.

Flash floods can be caused by storms moving slowly through an area or when large amounts of rain fall in a brief period of time. You won't know how deep water is if you can't see the street, especially at night when it's more difficult to see.

The National Weather Service publishes the following facts on its website.

- More than half of all flood-related deaths occur in vehicles.
- A few inches of rain can stall a vehicle, and rising water can reach a car door in less than a minute.
- 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock an adult over.
- 1 foot of rushing water can carry away a small car in seconds.
- 2 feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including trucks, vans and SUVs.

Be prepared. Plan an alternate route if you typically drive on streets prone to flooding. Monitor weather reports for flash flood warnings. Have sandbags on hand if you live in a flood-prone area.

In our fast-paced world, we are all in a hurry to get home or get to work or get to some other destination. Our new public service video shows a Mom faced with a flooded street. She makes the right decision to take an alternate route. Since "Life Changes in a Flash," it's worth it to stop, think about what's important – like the child in the back seat – and take an alternate route, even if it means a delayed arrival. Help us spread this important message to friends and family.



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water.
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