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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



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STATE POLICE

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Shapiro Administration Reminds Motorists about the Dangers of Flooding, Urges Never Drive through Flooded Roadways

Harrisburg, PA – At an event today, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) urged motorists to never drive through flooded roadways.

"It's hurricane season, and Pennsylvania is no stranger to heavy rain and flooding," said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. "Please, be safe. If a road is flooded, don't try to drive through it. It takes just two feet of fast-moving water to carry away most vehicles, including large SUVs."

"It's important to understand the difference between a flash flood watch and a flash flood warning, especially at night when flooding is harder to see," said **PEMA Director Randy Padfield**. "Regardless of whether it is a watch or warning, delaying unnecessary travel until after the immediate threat has passed is always a good option because water can rapidly rise and impede your ability to get yourself and your loved ones to safety."

When heavy rain is in the forecast, motorists should be alert for potential flooding on roadways and in low-lying areas. Drivers should always obey warning signs and traffic control devices, and never drive through flooding or standing water on roads. Shallow, swiftly flowing water can wash a car from a roadway. Also, the roadbed may not be intact under the water.

Anyone who drives around barriers intended to close a road can face increased penalties if emergency responders are called to rescue motorists who disregard traffic control signs.

"A fine of \$250 for ignoring barricades doubles to \$500 if first responders must rescue you or call a tow truck. Additionally, you get billed for the emergency response," said **PSP Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris**. "Aside from fines and likely car repairs, consider the danger to your life and others. It's not worth the risk."

Motorists are also reminded that Pennsylvania law requires headlights to be turned on anytime a vehicle's wipers are needed. Drivers should turn on their full headlights during rain events as the daylight running lights feature on some vehicles does not automatically turn on the taillights.

Some of Pennsylvania's biggest impacts from tropical systems have occurred in September (Lee, 2011 and Ida, 2021) and October (Sandy, 2012). More than half of all tropical cyclone-related deaths in the United States over the past decade have been from inland flooding.

The National Weather Service reminds everyone to "Turn Around, Don't Drown!" in flash flooding! For more information about flooding, visit <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood>. You can check the forecast throughout hurricane season by visiting www.hurricanes.gov and www.weather.gov.

More information about how to prepare for any type of emergency, including specific information for people with access and functional needs or pets, is available on the [Ready PA](#) webpage.

Motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 1,000 traffic cameras.

511PA is also available through a smartphone application for iPhone and Android devices, by calling 5-1-1, or by following regional Twitter alerts accessible on the 511PA website.

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