

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
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NEWS RELEASE
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SRBC URGES DRIVERS TO AVOID FLOODED ROADWAYS
Nearly half of all fatalities during flood events are vehicle related

HARRISBURG (Jan. 6) – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) today issued a drivers’ alert to caution vehicle operators not to drive through water when confronted with flooded roadways. While the much-needed snow and rain have provided a welcome relief to the drought, the above-normal precipitation levels are flooding roadways, creating hazardous conditions for drivers.

SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz stated that there have already been several incidences this year of drivers trapped in flood waters. Flooded roadways are very treacherous and can be life-threatening because flood waters are extremely fast flowing, forceful and unpredictable. Vehicles can easily become buoyant and quickly be swept away.

“People should not have a false sense of security because they are in a vehicle,” said Swartz. “A compact car can become buoyant with as little as 5 inches of water above the vehicle’s floorboard, and just a few more inches will float larger vehicles, including pickup trucks and vehicles equipped with four-wheel drive.”

Swartz said, “According to the National Weather Service, nearly half of all flood-related fatalities occur when people attempt to drive on flooded roadways.”

Swartz explained that roadways can become flooded when streams and rivers overflow their banks or in response to significant runoff from rapid snow melt and heavy downpours in areas where a road descends near a waterway.

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Swartz said, “Rising stream and river levels are clear reminders that flooding can occur any time of the year in the Susquehanna basin, which happens to be one of the nation’s most flood-prone watersheds.”

“We urge drivers not to attempt to drive on flooded roadways because they endanger not only their own lives, but the lives of rescuers, who may be trained emergency personnel or well-meaning, but untrained citizens.”

SRBC sponsors a training program to educate current and future drivers on the life-threatening dangers of driving on flooded roadways. Contact SRBC for more information on this training program. Also, there is a host of information on flooding in the Susquehanna basin and the basinwide flood forecast and warning system in SRBC’s web site at www.srbc.net (select Flood Forecast and Warning System).

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on Dec. 24, 1970 by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.