

Floods—Environmental Hazards

Objective: To assure familiarity and understanding of common environmental hazards present in flooded areas.

Floods present numerous environmental dangers, both during and after the flooding has occurred.

Before entering a flooded area, familiarize yourself with the area to determine any potential hazards you may encounter, and proceed with extreme caution.

Common hazards:

- **Chemical or toxic environments:** If the flood occurred in close proximity to where agricultural chemicals, industrial chemicals, or other hazardous agents were used or stored, they may have contaminated the floodwater. Also, storage tanks or other containers may be swept downstream, presenting leaking or explosion hazards.
- **Biological waste:** Floodwater can be contaminated by rotting vegetation, dead animals, or untreated sewage.
- **Fire:** Floodwater contaminated with flammable chemicals or materials can ignite if it comes in contact with an existing fire or other source of heat or sparks. Additionally, floods can destroy fire protection systems and inhibit emergency response efforts if a fire were to occur.
- **Electrical hazards:** Flooding may cause downed power lines, and standing water near electrical equipment creates an electrocution hazard.
- **Wild animals:** Flooding can displace wild animals, such as snakes, alligators, or rodents, introducing them to populated areas. Stagnant water can also be a breeding ground for disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes.
- **Mold:** Standing water may breed mold, which can cause allergy-like symptoms and aggravate existing allergies, asthma, or sinus or lung illnesses.
- **Driving:** It takes as little as six inches of standing water to cause some vehicles to stall and only two feet of moving water to sweep some vehicles away.

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This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: _____ Date: _____

Trainer: _____ Trainer's Signature: _____

Class Participants:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Remember to document attendance in the Training Track application of the Risk Management Center.