

Floods

INTRODUCTION

Floods occur when there is a rise of water with no place to go. Most floods are caused by heavy rain, overflowing rivers, ocean waves or melting snow. Some floods may only rise as a high as a few inches of water while some others can be as high as 20 feet!

Floods are the most common natural disaster in the world and can be very deadly. More people are killed in floods than any other natural disaster. Some floods are even capable of wiping away an entire city! Most of the times, floods take days or even months to develop but some can occur suddenly.

Most floods occur near rivers and coastal areas. Some floods also occur in areas with long periods of heavy rainfall. The flowing water of a flood can be very powerful. Floods with fast water flows are the most dangerous. The faster the flow, the more water it can carry. Most accidents happen when cars are swept off the road.



Floods

DIFFERENT TYPES

There are three major kinds of floods: river, flash and coastal floods.

River floods are the most common type of floods. They generally develop when there is too much water flowing into a river due to heavy rainfall or melting snow. In some situations, there is so much water in the river that it cannot carry it away anymore. When the capacity of a river is reached, the water will flow into the low-lying lands near the river. This can destroy farmlands, wash away houses and may even drown people and animals!

Flash floods occur very suddenly, with most of them being a result of heavy rainfall or thunderstorms. The extreme amount of water that falls in a short time cannot be handled by the sewage. As a result, entire cities become flooded in a short time. There is usually no warning before a flash flood. So, its impact can be devastating.

Coastal floods are mostly caused by tropical storms, such as hurricanes. Very high tides and tsunamis can also cause coastal floods. These kind of floods are often very devastating because in many countries, large groups of people live near coastal areas.



River Flood

Dangerous Floods

IN HISTORY

The top 5 deadliest floods all occurred around the Yellow River in China. The most devastating flood happened in 1931. It is estimated that about 3 million people were killed because of the floods. During this time, nearly 34,000 square miles of land was flooded which left 80 million people homeless.

The most destructive flood in U.S. history occurred in 1927. This disaster is also known as the Great Mississippi Flood. The river flood covered 27,000 square miles in ten different states. At its peak, 14% of the state of Arkansas was under water!

Hurricane Katrina was a very powerful violent storm that hit Louisiana in 2005. The hurricane caused massive coastal flooding. About 80% of the city of New Orleans was flooded. More than 1,000 people died and 100,000 people lost their homes.



Exercise 5: Are the statements true (T) or false (F)?

- | | | | |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| 1) The deadliest floods in history occurred along the Mississippi River. | () | 4) Katrina was the most destructive flood in US history. | () |
| 2) Katrina was a river flood that hit the city of New Orleans. | () | 5) 3 million people died during the Yellow River flood in 1931. | () |
| 3) The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 covered Arkansas completely. | () | 6) The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 hit 10 American states. | () |

Things to know

ABOUT FLOODS



When a flood is imminent, it is important to pack a bag with the things you might need in case you have to evacuate.

It is very important to not play in or around flood water. There might be chemicals or bacteria in the water that can cause diseases. In case your skin comes in contact with this water, it is important to wash the area with soap.

About 66% of flood deaths occur in vehicles. Most of these accidents happen when drivers decide to drive through flood waters. Just 2 feet of flood water is enough to carry a vehicle away.

No region in the United States is safe from floods. All the 50 states in the US have experienced floods in the last 5 years.

Floods cause more than \$4 billion in losses each year in the United States.