



Oro Valley Monsoon Preparedness Guide

Town of Oro Valley Stormwater Utility

STORMWATER UTILITY

The Arizona monsoons provide unique and complex challenges for the Town of Oro Valley, which is why the Stormwater Utility was developed in 2008. This division of the Town's Public Works Department was established to protect Oro Valley's working and natural environments before, during and after the occurrence of storm events. Some activities where you can see Stormwater Utility in action include, but are not limited to: street sweeping, storm cleanup, drainage channel vegetation maintenance, storm system inspections, and Adopt-A-Wash Program.

The Stormwater Utility is an excellent resource for information about floodplains, stormwater quality, and illicit discharge control.

WHAT IS A MONSOON?

Every summer, Southern Arizona experiences a weather phenomenon known as monsoon season. From approximately June 15 to September 30, monsoon season is marked by intense rain, lightning shows and thick dust storms.

While the rain provides a welcome relief from the usual arid heat, the high winds and thunderstorms that accompany this weather shift often create treacherous conditions. Dust storms and flash floods are prevalent during this time of year, making it exceedingly important to be prepared.

DRIVING DURING MONSOON SEASON

Thunderstorms, thick dust storms and flash floods are all very common during Southern Arizona's monsoon season. They also create hazardous conditions for motorists. Given the many washes and hills located within Oro Valley, it is critical to reacquaint ourselves with how best to handle adverse weather conditions while on the road.

Heavy Rain

- Ensure a safe following distance between cars—four seconds is ideal for stormy weather. Tires lose traction on wet surfaces, which can make it harder to stop suddenly.
- Watch for large vehicles traveling through puddles. They can throw blinding sheets of water across your windshield.
- If you begin to hydroplane, remove your foot from the gas pedal until you regain traction. **Do not brake suddenly.** If you are sliding, turn the wheel in the direction of the slide to straighten out.

Dust Storms

- Avoid driving during dust storms.
- Turn on your headlights and slow to a reasonable speed. Never stop on the pavement during a dust storm.
- If the storm becomes too severe, pull off the road as far to the right as possible, turn off all lights and set the parking brake.
- Do not turn on your hazards or keep your foot on the brake. Other cars may think you are still in motion and try to follow you.

Arizona Stupid Motorist Law

Many roads which flood during monsoon season have roadblocks or barriers to keep drivers from entering. These signs and barriers must be adhered to, otherwise you could be required to pay for emergency services should you become stuck. Per Arizona State Law A.R.S 28-910, any motorist who drives past a safety roadblock into a flooded wash or channel may be liable for the expense of emergency rescue services (up to \$2,000).

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The severe storms brought on by monsoon season can lead to a number of different emergencies, from power outages to flash floods. It is vital that all households prepare a contingency plan in case of an emergency.

Emergency Kits

Each household should put together an emergency kit. These kits should reflect the size of the household and should be maintained and updated regularly.

Formulate an Emergency Plan

- Identify meeting locations both inside and outside of the neighborhood for your family/household.
- Identify non-local emergency locations where you will meet if the inside/outside neighborhood meeting locations are not accessible. This can be an out-of-town friend's house, shelter, or hotel.
- Name an out-of-town contact. This can be someone who lives beyond the immediate area who will serve as the main point of communication for your household. This person is particularly important should your household get split up in an emergency.
- Make sure everyone in your household is familiar with alternative routes through town. The route you usually take could become blocked, so it is important to know the area.

Evacuation

Though rare, there is a possibility that during monsoon weather conditions, evacuations could become necessary. Follow the 5 P's of Immediate Evacuation in order to be prepared and remain safe.

- **People and Pets** and other livestock
- **Papers** and important documents
- **Prescriptions** like medications, eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.
- **Pictures** - irreplaceable memories
- **Personal computer** and information on hard drives or disks