



## Health Department Urges Spring Flood Preparedness

*National Public Health Week is April 7-13  
- Working Every Day for Your Health -*



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BURLINGTON – Waterbury residents used to look at the 1927 flood high water mark on the brick building on Elm Street with disbelief, until Tropical Storm Irene hit the state in 2011.

Spring flooding is a potential hazard every year as ice floes break like jagged pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle, forming blockages at bridges and tributaries and causing rivers and streams to overflow their banks.

“Flooding is a leading cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S., and most are preventable,” said Chris Bell, director of public health preparedness for the Vermont Department of Health. “Public Health Week is a good time for us all to remind each other not to underestimate the power of water – especially moving water.”

Part of being ‘Vermont Strong,’ Bell said, is to be ready for any hazard, including the possibility of flooding.

Most flooding-related deaths occur when people attempt to drive through flooded roadways, or cross moving water. Six inches of moving water can knock down an adult, and 18 inches can carry away a vehicle, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Floodwaters can also contain harmful bacteria, sewage, agricultural or industrial waste, chemicals metals and other substances, and can contaminate drinking water wells.

The Health Department has extensive information about precautions to take before and after a flood at: <http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/water/flood.aspx>.

Emergency information about flooding and power outages is also available in English plus 10 other languages at: [http://www.healthvermont.gov/local/rhealth/rh\\_fact.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/local/rhealth/rh_fact.aspx)

The American Red Cross has also just released a new flood app to help get your family and home ready for a flood, now available at iTunes or Google Play app stores.

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