



DIOCESE OF TUCSON RISK MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

July 2017

This month's advisory will address safety reminders for our much-welcome summer rains during "Monsoon", keeping in mind safe driving in heavy rain, blowing dust and flooding. Be safe!!



Top 10 Arizona Monsoon Safe Driving Tips

Brought to you by the Arizona State Troopers Association

- 1. SLOW DOWN!**
- 2. Avoid running washes**
- 3. Watch for hazard signs**
- 4. Dust storms - Pull aside, stay alive.**
- 5. Keep your distance between vehicles**
- 6. Traffic light outage means 4-way stop**
- 7. Vehicle inspection - check lights, windshield wipers & tires**
- 8. Allow extra travel time**
- 9. Emergency Kit**
- 10. Always wear a seat belt**

More information: www.aztroopers.org



Nine tips to get your Church ready for Arizona's monsoon rains

We are now at the beginning of the Arizona monsoon rains which will last until Sept. 15.

As usual, there could be heavy rains, electrical storms with loads of lightning, dust storms and those big dust storms, sometimes called haboobs. Then again, there could be almost no weather drama at all.

Just in case, here are 9 ways to prepare your church and grounds:

- **Have your roof fixed**

Have a trusted roofer replace asphalt shingles or tiles that are missing or loose, repair, patch and recoat built-up roofs. Foam roofs should be checked for holes made by birds or splits in foam or asphalt covering.

If you've had leaks in the recent past, get the damage repaired or maybe even replace your roof. Areas around pipes, vents and other penetrations, and at the parapets should be sealed.

- **Install gutters**

Many Arizona church buildings with sloped roofs don't have any gutters at all, but if you observe large puddle areas around a building, gutters and downspouts may be useful in directing water away from the building where it won't cause foundation problems.

- **Clean off the roof**

Maybe the roof is fine, but you've allowed leaves and other debris to build up in the valleys between different sections of your roof, along parapets, and over roof drains. If so, clean them out or have someone do it for you.

- **Prepare for power outages**

Lightning strikes can happen during monsoon storms. In most cases, if a blackout occurs, power will come back on soon.

Be prepared with flashlights, candles and matches that are easy to find in an emergency. Keep the phone number of your power company handy so you can check on the status of your neighborhood's power.

- **Electrical panel**

Label the different sections of your panel so that you can easily see where the circuit breakers are for each area of your buildings. That way, you can turn power back on more easily if a breaker trips during a storm.

- **Install a whole panel surge protector**

An electrician can hardwire a surge protector directly to your panel. This device will keep appliances and electronic equipment from being damaged during electric surges or power problems.

Use power strips as well for additional protection for important equipment. If you have more than one electric panel, have a surge protector installed on each panel.

- **Prune and thin trees near your house**

You don't want branches sweeping over the roof that can damage tiles or shingles during a storm. You don't want limbs breaking off and hitting buildings or vehicles.

Be especially careful to trim eucalyptus trees and giant palm trees. Palm trees loaded with dead fronds can burn like torches if struck by lightning.

- **Improve the drainage in landscape areas and yards**

Add drains to your driveways, sidewalks and patios. Divert the water to areas away from your buildings and away from your neighboring property.

- **Get rid of the dust**

After a dust storm, change the air filters on your heating and air conditioning ducts. Rinse off the outdoor compressor for your air conditioner.

More Tips for Safe Driving in Arizona During the Summer

Summer weather can bring hazardous driving conditions to Arizona, with dust storms, monsoon-flooded roads and searing temperatures not uncommon, and each presenting a different type of danger, says Bart Graves, spokesman for the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS).

With so many potential weather-related situations, exercising vigilance is critical for drivers to keep themselves and others safe. Here are a few things to look out for:

Car Maintenance

Tires, belts and hoses can be strained in hot temperatures, according to the DPS. Keeping your car's vulnerable parts in tip-top shape can help reduce the likelihood of mechanical failure. Plus, you're less likely to find yourself stranded on the highway.

Drivers should refer to their vehicle's owner's manual to determine the recommended maintenance schedule, says the DPS. Tires, meanwhile, require monthly tire pressure and tread checks (don't forget the spares), according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

High temperatures increase the risk of blowouts as tires build pressure and can overheat more quickly, especially those that aren't inflated properly, says Graves, who adds that tires with worn treads may carry an elevated risk.

Tire blowouts are particularly risky for motorists, Graves says. Each year, nearly 11,000 tire-related crashes occur nationally, resulting in nearly 200 deaths, according to the NHTSA.

The first sign of a blowout is often a loud boom or sense that your car is pulling to one side, according to the DPS. "People panic when that happens and slam on the brakes," Graves adds. However, doing so may lead to loss of control and a collision, he adds. DPS recommends lightly pressing on the gas pedal to maintain your car's existing speed while counter-steering to continue moving as straight as possible.

"Keep the vehicle straight and then, as soon as it's safe to do so, get off the highway," Graves says. To stay safe in the event of a breakdown, Graves recommends stocking it with water to stay hydrated and a medical kit for treating minor scrapes until emergency responders arrive.

Haboobs

Summer monsoon rains combined with an ongoing drought can give rise to massive dust walls known as haboobs, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). With wind speeds as fast as 60 mph, dust storms can obliterate visibility and make driving dangerous. A haboob, a name derived from Middle Eastern dust storms, can develop when moving thunderstorms push down hot, dry desert air and stir up sand, according to the NOAA.

In the Phoenix area, NOAA reports that haboobs typically happen up to three times each year.

"We always advise drivers to never think they can power their way through [a haboob]," Graves says. The storms typically last anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes or longer, according to the NOAA. Graves adds that motorists should move to the side of the road as soon as it's safely possible, keeping the engine running with the lights turned off and your foot off the brake to avoid flashing the brake light.

"Sometimes, in these situations, there's no visibility," Graves says, adding that drivers often will follow the car ahead of them, guided by its lights. To avoid a collision, Graves recommends turning off all lights so traffic continues to flow past you.

Monsoons

Monsoons can bring strong winds, lightning and heavy rain, which can flood low-lying areas known as washes, according to The Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC). Cars caught in these flooded areas may be overturned or swept away, sometimes resulting in death, the FCDMC warns.

"Even if the water is not moving, it is impossible to gauge the actual depth of water simply by looking at the water's surface, or determine if the roadway underneath has been washed away," the FCDMC notes in a press release.

"Never try to drive through a flooded wash," Graves says, adding that Arizona has a "Stupid Motorist Law" that wages heavy fines on drivers who need rescuing after driving around barricades to attempt passing through a flooded area. Motorists who encounter flooded roads should turn around or wait until the water recedes, the FCDMC says.