

State Emergency Service **Media Release**



Friday, 9 January 2014

Driving through floodwater a “recipe for disaster”.

With heavy rains expected in many parts of the state in the next few days, the State Emergency Service (SES) is cautioning motorists about the dangers of driving through floodwater.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has issued a number of warnings about the severe weather which is expected to bring rainfall of at least 150mms in some locations across the north of the state.

SES Acting Chief Officer Dermot Barry said driving through floodwater was a “recipe for disaster”.

“Driving through floodwater is the main cause of adult death during floods,” Mr Barry said.

“Floodwater washes out roads and tracks, causing unseen sinkholes and hollows to form. Even relatively shallow water has sufficient force to wash a car off a road or track, rendering the driver helpless and in danger of drowning.

“Even if the water looks still, there may be a strong current underneath the surface,” he said.

Mr Barry said the SES had deployed a four-person swiftwater rescue team to Port Pirie to allow a quicker response should anyone find themselves in difficulties in floodwater in northern parts of the state, while another swiftwater team is on standby in Adelaide.

“We know from experience that, given the expected rainfall, there is potential for flash flooding in a number of creeks in the Flinders Ranges and Mid North regions as well as in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Fleurieu Peninsula,” Mr Barry said.

Mr Barry said parents should ensure children do not play in floodwater.

“Apart from the risk of strong currents, floodwater picks up all sorts of debris, including raw sewage, dead animals, iron sheets, broken glass, fencing material, or any number of other dangerous objects,” he said.

During severe weather, the SES advises the following precautions:

- ensure loose items such as outdoor furniture, garden tools and children’s play equipment (such as trampolines and cubby houses) are put away or secured
- park vehicles undercover and well away from trees
- stay indoors and away from windows and skylights when weather conditions are severe
- stay away from fallen powerlines. Always assume fallen powerlines are live – they should be reported to SA Power Networks on 13 13 66
- never walk, ride or drive through floodwaters
- shelter and secure pets and other animals, and
- check weather forecasts regularly and listen to a battery-powered radio for updates.

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