

State Emergency Service **Media Release**



Sunday, 31 July 2016

Motorists continue to drive through floodwater despite warnings from State Emergency Service

With seven near misses in the past month, the State Emergency Service (SES) is again urging motorists to protect themselves and their passengers by not driving through floodwater.

The warning comes ahead of another cold front which the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) predicts will bring 20 to 40mm of rain in the Mount Lofty Ranges and 10 to 20mm in the Mid North district late tonight and early tomorrow morning.

With catchments already saturated, the rain may cause creeks to flood and water to flood across roads in the two districts.

Since 1 July, the SES and other emergency service agencies have rescued seven motorists who have become stranded in their motor vehicles after trying to drive through floodwater.

SES Chief Officer Chris Beattie said emergency service agencies are frustrated that motorists continue to ignore warnings.

“Statistics show that driving through floodwater is very dangerous. Not only does it endanger the lives of the motorist and their passengers, it also puts those rescuers who have to pull them out at extreme risk,” Mr Beattie said.

“World-first research conducted earlier this year by engineers at the University of New South Wales showed that as little as 15 centimetres of flowing water is enough to float a small car such as a Toyota Yaris. It completely floats away in 60 centimetres of water.

“Obviously, larger vehicles need deeper water to float but the important thing motorists need to understand is that modern vehicles are both airtight and water tight so when they are driven into floodwater they can bob around like a cork,” Mr Beattie said.

Floodwater can also harbor diseases, chemicals, contaminants and a wide range of rubbish.

“It can also contain human waste from flooded septic tanks which, if it gets inside a car, will need to be professionally cleaned out,” he added

The seven floodwater rescues undertaken by the SA emergency services since 1 July were at Currency Creek and McLaren Vale on 5 July and at Hillier, Forreston, Verdun, Coromandel Valley and Hahndorf during the extreme weather earlier this week (24-28 July).

July has been a particularly busy month for SES volunteers who have responded to almost 3,500 requests for assistance (RFA) from the South Australian community. This follows a busy May (1460 RFA) and June (688 RFA).

For media enquires telephone the SES Media Line on (08) 8211 6176

For SES response in floods or storms telephone 132 500. If the matter is life threatening telephone 000
www.ses.sa.gov.au