

River flooding occurs when river levels rise and overflow their banks or the edges of their main channel and inundate areas that are normally dry. River flooding can be caused by heavy rainfall, dam failures, rapid snowmelt and ice jams. The National Weather Service issues Flood Warnings for designated River Forecast Points where a flood stage has been established.

River flooding is classified as Minor, Moderate, or Major based on water height and impacts along the river that have been coordinated with the NWS and local officials. Minor river flooding means that low-lying areas adjacent to the stream or river, mainly rural areas and farmland and secondary roadways near the river flood. Moderate flooding means water levels rise high enough to impact homes and businesses near the river and some evacuations may be needed. Larger roads and highways may also be impacted. Major flooding means that extensive rural and/or urban flooding is expected. Towns may become isolated and major traffic routes may be flooded. Evacuation of numerous homes and business may be required.



There is an additional level of flooding known as record flooding. In many cases this falls into the major flood category, but it doesn't have to. A record flood is simply one where the water reaches a level higher than it ever has been recorded before. Therefore, record flooding can cause extensive damage or even no damage or other negative impacts at all.

Source: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood-hazards>

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