

Each year, more deaths occur due to flooding than from any other thunderstorm related hazard. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water. The next highest percentage of flood-related deaths is due to walking into or near flood waters. People underestimate the force and power of water. Many of the deaths occur in cars swept downstream. Many of these drownings are preventable. Never drive around the barriers blocking a flooded road. The road may have collapsed under that water. A mere 6 inches of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult. It takes just 12 inches of rushing water to carry away most cars and just 2 feet of rushing water can carry away SUVs and trucks. It is NEVER safe to drive or walk into flood waters.



## Turn Around Don't Drown® Warning Signs

### YELLOW WARNING SIGN

The yellow warning sign, right, When Flooded, Turn Around Don't Drown®; complies with Federal Highway Administration (FHA) standards and is intended for deployment as a permanent road sign. Warning signs alert drivers of a possible danger ahead, such as when it may be necessary to slow down and stop, or a road hazard or special situation may be ahead. [Details on producing this Turn Around Don't Drown® warning sign are available here.](#)



The "When Flooded, Turn Around Don't Drown®" warning sign should be deployed at locations where the incidence of flooding is high, the onset of flooding is rapid, and/or it is not practical to deploy incident signs in a timely manner.

NWS offices are encouraged to work with officials in their local areas in promoting use of this sign to save lives and property.

Warning signs have a black legend (i.e., lettering and outer border) and a yellow background (RGB color 255:208:69 or Pantone 116). More detailed guidance on use of warning signs can be found in [Chapter 2C of the MUTCD.](#)®

## PINK INCIDENT SIGN

The FHA, with its [Letter of Support](#), has encouraged use of the phrase “Flooding Ahead Turn Around Don’t Drown®” as an official incident management road sign (pink) following FHA specifications. [Get details on producing this Turn Around Don’t Drown® incident sign.](#)

Incident management signs are a specific type of Temporary Traffic Control (TTC) sign deployed in response to short-term events which impede the normal flow of traffic such as accidents, natural disasters, hazardous material spills, or other unplanned incidents. The “Flooding Ahead Turn Around Don’t Drown®” incident management sign is intended for use at locations where stream waters flooding across a road have made passage dangerous. The location may be a road which dips down to the level of a stream channel or a bridge or culvert which cannot pass high flood flows.



Incident management signs are intended for mounting on temporary sign holders such as the one shown above. They should not be mounted on construction barricades.

This type of incident sign has a black legend (i.e., lettering and outer border) and a fluorescent pink background (RGB color 255:40:140 or Pantone 232). More detailed guidance on incident signs can be found in Section 6I in [Part 6 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#).

## Policy on Use of Turn Around Don't Drown® Phrase

The phrase Turn Around Don't Drown® can be used all types of flood safety outreach. NWS encourages use of the phrase to further its mission to help protect life and property. The phrase may be used by NOAA/NWS employees working in an official capacity for any educational, safety, and/or outreach purpose. The phrase may also be used by external parties or NOAA/NWS employees in an unofficial capacity subject to guidelines in Sections 2 and 3 below.

### 1. USE OF TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN® IN ROAD SIGNS

Federal Highway Administration standards call for temporary incident road signs to be pink and rectangular-shaped. Permanent warning signs must be yellow and diamond-shaped (see samples below). You are welcome to print signs wherever you wish.

### 2. USE OF TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN® PHRASE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Anyone can use the phrase Turn Around Don't Drown® on Social Media to help warn the public about the dangers of driving into flood waters. You can also use the yellow Turn Around Don't Drown® sign on social media. This limited permission is given on condition the use is lawful and professional in manner and is subject to review by NOAA/NWS. Any person or entity as described above using the phrase "Turn Around Don't Drown®" agrees with these conditions and agrees to immediately stop using the phrase should NOAA/NWS, in its sole discretion, determine for any reason that the use of the phrase is not in the best interests of the NWS flood safety program. If you believe the Turn Around Don't Drown® phrase is being improperly used, please contact the [NWS Communications Office](#).

### 3. EXTERNAL USE OF TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN® PHRASE

NWS partners in the weather enterprise may use the phrase “Turn Around Don’t Drown®” in broadcasts to encourage flood safety without special permission or license agreement from NOAA. For example, a broadcaster stating a flash flood warning is in effect may remind viewers to “turn around don’t drown” at flooded low water crossings. This limited permission is given on condition the use is lawful and professional manner and is subject to review by NOAA/NWS. Any person or entity as described above using the phrase “Turn Around Don’t Drown®” agrees with these conditions and agrees to immediately stop using the phrase should NOAA/NWS, in its sole discretion, determine for any reason that the use of the phrase is not in the best interests of the NWS flood safety program. If any NWS staff member believes the Turn Around Don’t Drown® phrase is being improperly use, he or she should notify the [NWS Communications Office](#).

Parties external to NOAA, as well as NOAA employees working in an unofficial capacity, may also use the phrase “Turn Around Don’t Drown®” in printing, recording, or electronic storage media (e.g., pamphlet, clothing, badge, logo, video, audio, or web page), subject to the following conditions:

- + The phrase will be used for the purpose of encouraging public flood safety.
- + If the phrase is used in print format, it must include the registered trademark symbol ® at the end.
- + Anyone using the phrase on a product, must provide one copy to NWS at no charge. The NWS will have the option of including the final product as an outreach resource in the “Turn Around Don’t Drown®” webpage. Should the NWS decide to include the product in the Toolbox, full credit will be granted to the author and organization/company.

If the external party intends to meet all the above conditions, they should submit a written request to the Director of the NWS Communications Office. The request should describe how the Turn Around Don’t Drown® phrase will be used, include a pre-production version of the use (e.g., on audio, video, draft hard copy, web page prototype), and be submitted to:

**Linda Taylor**  
1325 East West Hwy, SSMC2 18100  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
[linda.taylor@noaa.gov](mailto:linda.taylor@noaa.gov)

Permission to use the phrase will be preserved in a license agreement between NOAA and the external party. NWS will prepare the license agreement using a standard template (see [attachment 1](#)). The license agreement will become effective when signed by both the party seeking permission to use the phrase (“licensee”) and the Director of the NWS Communications Office. NWS Communications will notify the licensee that the license agreement is effective once it has been signed by the Director of the NWS Communications Office.



Source: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood-turn-around-dont-drown>

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