



What is a Monsoon?

A **monsoon**—a weather phenomenon occurring primarily in July, August and September—brings rain and cooler temperatures to Arizona. It also raises special concerns for you, your family and your property.

A monsoon triggers heavy rainfall, lightning, severe winds, dust storms and **flash floods**—all of which can endanger homeowners, motorists or anyone caught unaware.

Rain

Rains throughout the state can quickly fill channels, rivers and washes, creating a potentially life-threatening danger.

A flash flood caused by a short yet intense rainfall can occur virtually anywhere—mountains, canyons, flat desert or urban areas.

The [National Weather Service](#) may issue watches or warnings to identify a thunderstorm hazard.

A **flood watch** or **flash flood watch** means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood. Affected residents should take the following precautions.

- Be prepared to evacuate.
- If time allows, bring in outdoor furniture and move valuables to higher places in your home.
- Unplug electrical appliances, and, if possible, move them to higher levels. Do not touch an electric appliance if you are wet or standing in water.
- Keep the gas tank in your car full, in case you have to evacuate.

A **flood warning** means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

A **flash flood warning** means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately.

Always listen to the radio or television for current information.

Lightning

[Lightning](#) is attracted to metal and water and tends to strike the highest or tallest objects. Observe the following to avoid lightning strikes:

- You are in the lightning strike zone if you hear thunder five seconds or less after seeing lightning.
- Avoid wide open areas such as fields and golf courses.
- Stay off hilltops and other high points of land.
- Don't stand near trees or tall poles.
- Stand at least 7 feet away from tall objects.
- Avoid metal objects such as golf carts and clubs, lawn mowers and pipes.

If you are caught in the open:

- Get to the lowest point of ground you can. Kneel or squat to minimize contact points with the ground.
- Don't lie flat. This will make you a bigger target.
- Don't huddle with others. Spread out at least 15 feet apart.
- Remove golf shoes or steel-toed boots.
- If you are in the water, get out and get to land.

Dust Storms

Avoid dust storms if possible. If [driving when a dust storm hits](#), pull as far off the road as possible and wait until it passes. Turn off the car and headlights and set the parking brake. Keep your foot off the brake pedal or other drivers may think you're a car in motion.



If conditions prevent pulling off the road, proceed at a prudent, reduced speed. In this situation, turn your lights on and use the center line as a guide. Never stop on the pavement.

(Source: [Maricopa County Flood Control District](#), [Arizona Department of Transportation](#))