



State Emergency Operations Center

Joint Information Center

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Don't Let Flood Dangers Spoil Holiday Weekend—Avoid All Closed Waterways

PEARL, Miss.—As Mississippi residents and guests prepare to enjoy the beauty of Mississippi's waterways this holiday weekend, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi State Department of Health and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks would like to remind people of the dangers still present in flood affected areas.

"Mississippi's flooded waterways remain closed and pose a danger to health and safety," said MEMA Director Mike Womack. "People enjoying the outdoors this holiday weekend should avoid all flooded areas."

An Executive Order issued by Gov. Haley Barbour closing waterways to all boating, recreation and sightseeing activities remains in effect for the following counties: Adams, Bolivar, Claiborne, Coahoma, DeSoto, Jefferson, Humphreys, Issaquena, Sharkey, Tunica, Warren, Washington, Wilkinson and Yazoo. This closure includes the Mississippi River, its tributaries and other areas flooded by the high water in those counties.

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks continues to monitor closed waterways and remains committed to its mission to protect people and property, said MDWFP representative Jim Walker. Boating, recreation and sightseeing activities are prohibited on closed waterways, and violators can be ticketed or arrested.

Remember that flooded waterways pose a high safety risk, and even areas where flood waters have begun to recede can remain dangerous:

- Floodwaters may have strong currents and unseen hazards under the surface of the water.
- Floodwaters often have high levels of bacteria as a result of flooded sewage systems and the decay of plant and animals that have been killed during the flood.
- Floodwaters may contain oil, gas, diesel, fertilizers or other chemicals.

The Mississippi State Department of Health offers precautions to protect your health:

- Floodwater may be contaminated by sewage systems, agricultural and industrial waste, and septic tanks. If you have open cuts or sores exposed to floodwater, keep them as clean as possible by washing with soap and clean water. Apply antibiotic ointment to reduce the risk of infection. If a wound or sore develops redness, swelling or drainage, see a physician.
- Do not allow children to play in floodwater. They can be exposed to water contaminated with raw sewage. Do not allow children to play with toys that have been in floodwater until the toys have been disinfected. Use one-quarter cup of bleach to one gallon of water.

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The safest thing residents and guests can do when enjoying outdoor activities this holiday weekend is avoid all flooded areas.

For more information or questions, contact the Mississippi State Department of Health 1-866-458-4948 or Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks 601-432-2400.

To learn more about how floodwaters can affect your health, visit www.HealthyMS.com.

For more information visit us online at www.msema.org. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook using the keyword MSEMA.

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