

# Flooded Roadways

Every year, firefighters are called on to rescue a stranded motorist who attempted to drive through running water. This can be a life-or-death situation for the passengers of the vehicle as well as for the firefighters.

Control of a vehicle can be lost in as little as 6 inches of water. Most vehicles will begin to float in 2 feet of water. It is very difficult, especially at night, to discern the depth or force of flowing water. What may seem like a shallow stream may have unseen depth or may be flowing much faster under the surface.

The way to prevent becoming trapped or swept away by flowing water is to not drive through it. Find an alternate route whenever available, even if it takes extra time out of your day. If no alternative route is available, wait it out. Arizona's monsoons are usually fast moving and temporary.

In 1995, Arizona created the "Stupid Motorist Law" to encourage Arizona drivers to use common sense when it comes to driving through flooded areas. The Law specifically bans drivers from driving around barricades in place to prevent them from driving through a flooded area. Drivers trapped after driving around barricades may be responsible paying the cost incurred by police and fire emergency personnel.

## Safety Tips

- Never drive through moving water
- If you are stuck in a wash call 911 immediately
- Do not drive around barricades, they are there for a reason
- Even heavy duty raised vehicles are no match for flowing water, do not overestimate your vehicle's ability
- If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground. DO NOT attempt to push your car to higher ground as the ground underneath the surface may be unstable.
- Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways. Flood debris may also hide animals and broken bottles. Avoid walking or driving through it.