



# Office of Emergency Services

# New Release

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

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## Spring landslide dangers

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** - Spring flood season in West Virginia brings the potential danger of landslides to residents.

"We want people to be aware of the danger of landslides from spring wet weather," said Stephen S. Kappa, West Virginia Office of Emergency Services director. "Landslides can cause debris to block or collapse roads, or damage and destroy homes.

"West Virginia residents living in landslide-prone areas should be aware of the warning signs and be prepared to react quickly."

The slope of the land, the type of geology, ground saturation, and rainfall intensity and duration all play major roles in triggering landslides. People living in landslide-prone areas should be aware of the dangers during severe weather and be ready to act if the situation warrants.

The WVOES, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Geological Survey suggest the following cautionary actions:

Before a storm:

1. Become familiar with the land around you. Learn whether landslides have occurred in your area. Slopes where landslides have occurred in the past are likely to experience them in the future.
2. Watch the patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes near your home, and note especially the places where runoff water converges, increasing flow over soil-covered slopes. Watch the hillsides around your home for any signs of land movement, such as small landslides or debris flows or progressively tilting trees.
3. Contact your local authorities to learn about the emergency-response and evacuation plans for your area and develop your own emergency plan for your family and business.

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During a storm:

1. Stay alert and stay awake during dangerous times. Many landslide fatalities occur when people are sleeping. Listen to a radio for warnings of intense rainfall.
2. If you are in areas susceptible to landslides, consider leaving if it is safe to do so. Remember that driving during an intense storm can be hazardous.
3. Listen for any unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together. A trickle of flowing or falling mud or debris may precede larger flows. If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and for a change from clear to muddy water.
4. Be especially alert when driving. Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flows.

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