



# FEMA

## TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

**Tom Green County, TX** – NOAA’S National Weather Service (NWS) reports that 80 percent of flood-related deaths in South Texas occur as a result of people driving through low-water crossings, walking along the banks of flooded areas, or playing in floodwaters.

Hector Guerrero, a native of Austin, Texas and Warning Coordination Meteorologist for the NWS forecast office in San Angelo, Texas, decided to address the alarming concern. Working in conjunction with his NWS colleagues and partners, he launched the campaign: “TURN AROUND, DON’T DROWN.”

People underestimate the force and power of water. Six inches of fast-moving flood water can knock over an adult, and it takes only two feet of rushing water to float most vehicles. More than half of all flood fatalities result from automobiles being swept downstream.

The Turn Around, Don’t Drown (TADD) campaign was launched on May 22, 2003, with a news conference at NWS Southern Region Headquarters located in Fort Worth, Texas. The partners included the NWS, Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH), and the Texas Division of Emergency Management. Informational material, posters, and bumper stickers were provided, along with a demonstration of a new TADD web page. In an effort to reach as many people as possible, Guerrero and his TADD partners held conference calls with representatives from NWS regions across the country to coordinate a nationwide campaign.

In May 2005, through a grant provided by the Allstate Foundation, FLASH, NWS, and Southwestern Insurance Service (SWS), the foundation expanded the Turn Around, Don’t Drown campaign in Texas. They targeted the major cities collectively known as flashflood alley – Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin. The cities had alarming flood-related fatalities. Outdoor billboards driving home the flood safety message have been erected in them. The city of San Antonio has placed bumper stickers displaying the slogan on all police, fire, and city vehicles. The message has also been spread through the local media via public service announcements (PSA), distribution of bumper stickers by the Texas Floodplain Management Association, animated presentations, and informative FLASH flood safety flash cards. In 2005 NOAA designated a week in March as Flood Safety Awareness Week.

According to records from the National Climatic Data Center, from January 2007 to July 2007, Texans have experienced more than 900 flooding events, more than doubling the ten-year average of 450 events per year. Over 2,100 flash flood warnings have been issued for the year; again more than double the 10-year average of 903. The number of flooding incidents has increased in the state of Texas, but flood-related fatalities have slightly declined across the U.S.



State-wide,  
Texas



### Quick Facts

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**Amount Not Available**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Education/Outreach/Public Awareness**

Primary Funding:

**Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP)**