

Chapter Corner September 2009

Flood Safety Question Added to Oklahoma Driver's Exam

Over the course of the next year, ASFPM will be “showcasing” activities that model creative ideas and solutions being demonstrated by our Chapters. If your Chapter has something you'd like us to share, please contact Kait Laufenberg at Kait@floods.org.

Recently we were notified of some promising outreach activities going on in our Oklahoma Chapter. The Oklahoma Chapter has just succeeded in getting a flood safety question added to the Oklahoma Driver's Licensing Exam and flood safety information added to the Oklahoma Driver's Manual. They have also partnered with the Oklahoma Association for Pupil Transportation (OAPT) to provide continuing education to school bus drivers on the dangers of driving through flood waters.

How they Did It

Following the death on May 3, 2009 of a woman in Pryor, OK, who drove around barricades and into floodwaters, the Oklahoma Chapter seized the moment to approach the State Department of Public Safety, the state's driver licensing authority. Their letter included educational information about flood safety and a potential question for the driver's licensing exam.

The Department of Public Safety agreed to add the question to the driver's exam, to add flood safety information to the Oklahoma Driver's Manual, and to share educational outreach materials with key stakeholders. The new version of the Oklahoma Drivers Manual is scheduled to be printed in August / September 2009. As a result, driver's education classes throughout the state are now incorporating flood safety into their curriculum and the Oklahoma Drivers Licensing Exam will include a flood safety question.

Sample Question for Written Drivers Exam

Question: You can lose control of your car in just SIX inches of flowing water, but how many inches of flowing water would be enough to float MOST vehicles?

- a. 10 inches
- b. 12 inches
- c. 24 inches
- d. 36 inches

Answer: c. 24 inches

Networking with Partners

The driver's licensing exam question was borrowed and used with permission from material posted on the NOAA website. In feedback the Chapter received later, the state Department of Public Safety mentioned that, “....we knew we needed to do something [about flood safety and

driving], but we weren't sure where to go. Giving us the materials and the question made it easy for us to take action." Upon release of the new exam, the Oklahoma Chapter will join the Department of Public Safety in a press release to promote safety in driving during flood conditions.

The Oklahoma Chapter has also developed a partnership with the state's Department of Education, which has led to additional networking opportunities with the Oklahoma Association for Pupil Transportation (OAPT). The Oklahoma Department of Education – specifically the Director of Transportation/Student Transfers at the Oklahoma State Department of Education — requires school bus drivers to have 4 hours of continuing education per year. The Oklahoma Chapter is developing material on flood safety for school bus drivers. OAPT asked to partner with the Oklahoma Chapter to develop material for their drivers' continuing education requirement on flood safety. The relationship with the local OAPT contact led to a connection with the national association National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and discussions are now forming about using the material for school bus driver continuing education nationwide.

References & Resources

[Letter Oklahoma sent to the Department of Public Safety](#) *(including the exam question)*

[NOAA webpage where the question was found](#)

[Arizona's Stupid Motorist Law](#) *(law against driving through flood waters)*

[NOAA flood safety outreach materials](#)