



*Embassy of the United States of America
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

MESSAGE FOR U.S. CITIZENS – WEATHER HAZARDS

October 10, 2013

The U.S. Embassy alerts all U.S. citizens residing in or traveling to Saudi Arabia that many regions in the Kingdom are prone to sudden and unexpected weather hazards, such as dust storms and heavy flooding, throughout the year. Please pay close attention to local weather advisories and Saudi Government notifications regarding potential weather hazards, including flooding.

On October 9, 2013, the Makkah area had periods of heavy rain. The Hajj site of Arafat was flooded and reports indicate some of the camp sites were damaged. While work is underway to repair the area in preparation for the days of Hajj (October 13 to October 18, 2013), we urge all U.S. citizens performing Hajj to stay alert to weather hazards. Please avoid low lying areas, such as pedestrian trails that were flooded yesterday. We advise pilgrims to stay with their travel groups and follow all safety and security instructions.

Exercise extreme caution in leaving home or traveling by road in the event of any rain. Water levels may change rapidly and without warning as even light rainfall in the past has caused significant flooding resulting in disruption, property damage and loss of life. U.S. citizens who experience an emergency are reminded to dial the following numbers for assistance from local authorities:

- General Emergencies - dial 999
- Traffic Accidents - 993
- Electricity Emergency - 933
- Water Emergency - 939
- Natural Disasters - 966
- National Security – 989

We advise U.S. citizens to monitor local radio and other media to be aware of weather developments. In the past, minor rainfall has caused dangerous flooding very quickly, limiting the time available for a safe evacuation. Inform family and friends of your whereabouts and remain in close contact with your travel agency, sponsor, hotel staff, transportation providers (e.g. airlines), and local officials for evacuation instructions during a weather emergency.

In the aftermath of some previous storms in the Kingdom, especially in Jeddah, U.S. citizens encountered difficult and often dangerous conditions that lasted for several days. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris, adversely affecting access to residences, businesses and

airports. Although quick to respond, Saudi Government safety and security personnel may not be available to assist all affected areas in a timely manner. Telephone networks may become overloaded making communications difficult. In the event of a storm, travelers should be aware that they may not be able to depart the affected area for at 24 to 48 hours or longer. Flood preparation guidance may be found on the website of the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)

Citizens living in or traveling to weather hazard-prone regions should consider organizing a kit at home or work or other identified safe haven including a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, and vital documents (especially your passport and other identification) and be prepared to shelter in place as emergency shelters may not be available or may be inaccessible. The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran are not equipped to serve as shelters and may be inaccessible.

The U.S. Embassy also encourages U.S. citizens to review "[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)," which includes valuable security information for those both living and traveling abroad. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well. You can also download our free [Smart Traveler iPhone App](#) to have travel information at your fingertips. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada, or outside the United States and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the [U.S. Department of State's, Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), [TravelAlerts](#)

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