

FLOODING

Alabama is susceptible to flooding year-round due to its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and the nearly unlimited supply of moisture it provides. When storm systems move into the area and combine with this moisture, resulting heavy rainfall can produce flooding. This can occur from large storm systems, decaying tropical systems or slow-moving, summertime thunderstorms, which produce large amounts of rainfall in a short amount of time.

Flash floods often occur within minutes or hours of heavy rainfall or a dam failure. The rapidly rising water can destroy structures and bridges, down trees, create new waterways and trigger catastrophic mudslides. Areas most prone to flash floods are urban areas, small streams and rivers, culverts, and storm drains. Urbanization increases water runoff two to six times over what would occur in natural terrain. This causes streets and parking lots to become swift moving rivers, and basements and building ground floors to quickly fill with water.



Flooding can also occur when the water level of a river, stream, or lake increases. This can happen when spring or winter rains fill the basin with too much water too quickly. Other events occur from slow moving storm systems or decaying tropical systems. Water overflows the river banks into low lying areas and can last for several days or weeks.



Before and after pictures of Walnut Creek in Chilton County. Waters quickly rise above bank full and spread into nearby fields during flood events. Note the roadway in the before picture is now completely under water. Photos provided by John Simon.