

Major Colorado Disasters

Colorado has been hit with disasters in the past that have killed hundreds, required evacuations and resulted in having certain areas of the state being declared Federal Disaster Areas. In the past 10 years, a number of Colorado disasters have caused millions of dollars in damage. Other hazards, such as tornadoes or winter storms, have threatened lives or caused property damage.

Winter Hazards

- Colorado leads the nation in the number of avalanche deaths every year
- 8-9 people are killed each year in avalanches
- 77 deaths were caused by winter weather in 1998
- 51 deaths caused by extreme cold in 1997

March 2003 Blizzard

- Denver received 31.5 inches of snow in two days
- Rocky Mountains received as much as 87 inches in various places
- Parts of I-25, I-70 and I-76 all closed
- Denver International Airport closed
- Residents trapped at home for 3 days
- Colorado National Guard sent 21 humvees to rescue stranded motorists
- Snow Emergency declared by Governor
- Insurance industry estimates \$93 million in damage; worst winter storm in state history
- Power lost for 2-3 days in portions of metro Denver and in other Front Range cities and towns.

Floods

- 64 Colorado counties have flood prone areas
- 250,000 people live in areas designated as flood plains
- 15,000 commercial structures in flood plain areas
- More than 330 killed in floods between 1900-1993

Big Thompson Canyon Flood - July, 1976

- Worst flood in Colorado history
- More than 140 people killed
- 418 homes destroyed

- 52 businesses destroyed
- \$35.5 million in damage

South Platte River Flood - June, 1965

- 6 people killed
- 26 bridges destroyed
- More than 1000 buildings destroyed in metro Denver
- 600+ homes destroyed in City and County of Denver
- Phone service disrupted for 8,000 customers

Fires

- Worst wildfire season in state history in 2002
- More than 3,000 separate fires
- More than 600,000 acres burned
- Nearly 400 homes and 620 outbuildings destroyed
- Insurance costs totaled nearly \$80 million dollars.
- Affected counties declared National Disaster Areas

Hayman Fire - June 2002

- Largest wildfire ever to hit Colorado
- Burned for 3 weeks
- More than 138,000 acres burned
- More than 130 homes destroyed
- Hundreds evacuated
- Property losses totaled nearly \$30 million

Tornadoes

- Colorado averages 40 tornadoes a year
- Colorado ranks 9th in the nation in number of tornadoes each year
- June 1990 Limon tornado caused \$12 million in damage
- Winds can reach up to 200 mph in a tornado
- May-July are most dangerous months, but tornadoes have been reported during 9 months of the year
- Tornadoes hit mainly in the afternoon to early evening

