Floods are extremely dangerous.

I have experienced flood danger before.

I was looking after a friend's place while they went on holiday. I knew there would be a few days of solid rain. On the third day, I got myself ready for work and drove down the mountain,

only to find that the main road was completely flooded. I thought about driving through it, but I had no idea how deep the water was at each point, so I decided to take a longer route that avoided the flood completely. I was late for work but my safety was more important.

Later that night, I found out that some other people had attempted to drive across that flooded road, but they were all carried away by the strong current.

Floods often look calm from the surface, but we have no idea of the hazards that lie underneath.

I was lucky I made the right decision, it saved my life.

Never wait for a warning to act. Never wait until you see a flood to act.

Do not expect the SES or Police will be able to help you evacuate, sometimes this is not possible.

They may be tied up with other situations.

If floods frequently occur in your area, it is important you know how to be safe near a flood.

Your safest option during a flood is to leave early and avoid being affected by the flood.

Leaving early means you are far away from the flood when it occurs.

If you are living in or visiting a high-risk flood area, there are two things you need to know.

Firstly, it is vital that you know your area well and can identify any flood risks and escape routes.

This includes places of safety that you can relocate to if there is a flood in your area. You also need to know alternative routes for leaving your area, in case your regular route is blocked.

Identify the flood risks in your area, including any rivers, creeks, dams, water catchments, and any other environmental structures that may create flood conditions. Research the flood history of your area and whether floods are expected to occur in the future. Seek flood information from your local council.

You can also use the SES online tools to find flood information specific to your local area.

Talk to your neighbours about their past experience of flooding in the area, and ask them for details.

Identify safe places to meet in your local area, the location of water level markers, and which roads and bridges may be affected or closed if there is a flood in your area. Seek details from your neighbours about how flooding will affect your local area.

If you are evacuated during a flood, you need to know where is a safe place to meet. If you do these tasks, you will be more prepared for any flood eventuality.

Secondly, you need to stay informed using different sources of information.

Keep an eye on your local weather conditions. Stay updated using the SES, BOM or Emergency Victoria websites, social media and television. If heavy rain is predicted, watch for Flood Watch or Flood Warning announcements on the news.

These sources of information will help you identify if there is a flood risk in your area.

If you need to leave to avoid a flood, your safest option is to leave early.

Remember that floods can occur anywhere and at any time of the year. Be prepared so that you know what to do if there is a flood in your area. Know what you will do, when you will leave and where you will go to avoid the risk from floods.