

Item Description: House explodes amid flash flooding, prompting declaration of state of emergency: 'I've never seen flooding like this'

Publishing Platform(s): Web, Instagram

*This is a **web+social assignment** that will require you to (a) produce copy for a web article and (b) adapt your web copy for **the social template described below**.*

Production Type: Original

Source URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-jersey-flash-flooding-rescues/>

As a reminder, original content synthesizes material from multiple sources into a unique finished product, whereas curated content merely presents and contextualizes the curated source material for the TCD audience.

Style Reminder: For a more general discussion of brand standards for tone and terminology, please consult the [TCD Style Guide](#).

Social Template: 2 Slide List

After completing your web article, you'll adapt your web copy for use in the social template linked above. The "Social Copy" section of this document (see below!) includes a skeletal outline with specific character-count requirements that you should use when crafting your social copy. For a review of use cases and best practices, please see TCD's Social Template Review [here](#).

Web Format & Word Count: 🤔 Bad News 300-450 words

We use this template (and the accompanying subheadings) to report on and add context to troubling climate news — while trying to avoid using the politicized word "climate" itself when easy to avoid, such as with "increasing global temperatures." The article should match the following format:

- **INTRO:** Begin with a paragraph introducing the trend, event, concept, development, etc., explicitly naming the subject matter in your lede.
- **THE WHAT:** Add a subhead titled "What's happening?" or "What happened?" Beneath it, provide a short, clear explanation answering that question — including details like jarring stats, key dates, and reactive quotes from experts or social media, where applicable.
- **THE WHY:** Add a subhead titled "Why is SUBJECT important?" or "Why is EVENT concerning?" Beneath it, explain why this topic matters. Depending on the news item in question, this might mean detailing the overall climate context of the problem (i.e., Why is this bad for the environment? Why will this contribute to our planet's overheating?) or what the effects could be if this problem continues to persist (potential health issues, severe weather threatening homes, animals that could go extinct, etc.).

- **THE SOLUTION:** Add a subhead titled, “What’s being done about SUBJECT?” or “What can I do to help SUBJECT?” Beneath it, present positive, solutions-oriented answers to those questions. You can include positive policy developments in the fight against this problem (local, national, global, etc.), a list of actions everyday people can take to mitigate the issue (from lessening reliance on single-use plastics to home electrification), or anything similar. Only point to small changes, like unplugging energy vampires, if relevant to the topic; otherwise, stick to relevant or broader changes people can make so we are not seeming to suggest small, unrelated solutions for big problems.

See a sample article here:

www.thecooldown.com/outdoors/rising-sea-level-usa-states-flooding-cities/

Additional Assignment Notes: Note to writer: please proceed with caution about causation (we do not have much proof yet), and please be careful with soapboxing about electric appliances when someone's house just exploded.

In your web copy, please explain the flood event and the long-term impact of climate change on flood frequency and severity, foregrounding how these extreme weather events can impact humans by damaging homes and businesses, increasing insurance premiums, and potentially injuring people. Discuss how increased rainfall, rising sea levels and urbanization contribute to the problem. When possible, include a few similar stories that TCD has covered in the past.

Special Brand Messaging Guidelines: Tone & Language Requirements:

In your web copy, please be sure to distinguish the difference between an isolated weather event and climate change as a pattern, explaining that, although extreme weather events have always existed, the scientific consensus is that human-induced climate change supercharges extreme weather events, making them more powerful and dangerous to our communities, linking back to this article:

www.thecooldown.com/outdoors/steroids-extreme-weather-climate-change-storms/

Include a few instances of stories, technologies, organizations, or policies TCD has covered that are helping combat extreme weather events and that are making us more resilient against them, as well as a list of actions everyday people can take to mitigate the issue.

===

Partner Requirements Summary:

IF the story relates to widespread power outages, near the end of the article, please make sure to include two sentences about solar opportunities per the guidelines below.

Partner Requirements:

-Add one sentence noting that installing solar panels alongside battery storage can help people make their homes more resilient when extreme weather events do occur.

-In a follow-up sentence, note that EnergySage provides a free service that makes it easy to compare quotes from vetted local installers and save up to \$10,000 on solar installations. On every mention of EnergySage include this link:

<https://links.thecooldown.com/energysage-resilience>

Note that this URL does NOT apply if the article is substantively about EnergySage or solar installation; in that case, please use the URL with the UTM provided in the Additional Assignment notes. Make sure that the only organization mentioned in reference to solar is EnergySage (except when referencing leasing).

===

Linking Requirements:

Please also link back to TCD's Guide page on exploring critical climate issues:

guide.thecooldown.com/actions/explore-critical-climate-issues/

Reminder: Most notes and guidelines are written for the *TYPE* of article this is and **may not always apply to your exact topic**. Please view the Additional Assignment Notes as the **primary instructions** for the assignment (especially for hyperlinks) and the Special Brand Messaging Guidelines as **supplementary**. If you have any questions about the assignment instructions, please reply-all to your assignment email and ask for guidance.

When this copy is ready for review, please submit a **review form** at the following URL:

https://airtable.com/shrdp7pxzL9uiKd5h?prefill_Item+Description=recvtLLSQAbzxac8j&prefill_Template=rec745Z3BpCDQh1FE

—

Tentative Headline: House explodes amid flash flooding, prompting declaration of state of emergency: 'I've never seen flooding like this'

— Web Copy —

As firefighters were in the midst of responding to devastating flash floods in northern New Jersey on Monday night, they received alerts that a house had exploded and was engulfed in flames despite the torrential rains, [CBS News New York reported](#).

At least two people had been killed in the flooding, according to CBS News, though reportedly no one was harmed by the house explosion.

[//EMBED//](#)

What's happening?

On Monday, July 14, slow-moving thunderstorms dumped inches of rain on northern New Jersey and New York City over the course of just hours, with Watchung, New Jersey, receiving more than 6.5 inches, [reported NJ.com](#).

According to witnesses, the [flooding](#) started slowly at first but quickly rose to catastrophic levels.

“Maybe in like 15, 20 minutes it went from maybe just a little stream of water, and then it just started flooding over,” one witness [told CBS News New York](#). “Pretty scary.”

The suddenness of the [flooding](#) left many local residents stranded in their vehicles and in need of rescue.

First responders used watercraft and heavy construction equipment to traverse the floodwaters and reach those in need. Some were rescued in the bucket of a massive front loader, per CBS News.

At the height of the storm, [floodwaters](#) swept a vehicle carrying two women into a brook. Although a witness called 911, first responders were unable to reach the vehicle under the treacherous conditions, and the women were presumed to have drowned, [according to WABC New York](#).

“I’ve never seen flooding like this,” said Michael Vargas, a local resident who was trapped in his vehicle for more than an hour, [per CBS News New York](#).

Meanwhile, in the midst of flood-rescue efforts, first responders received reports of a house explosion that had occurred in North Plainfield. When firefighters arrived, the entire front of the home had been blown off, and the structure was engulfed in flames, per CBS News.

Firefighters waded through floodwaters several inches high, as they used hoses to douse the flames. Officials were investigating the fire’s origins but had not yet announced any findings, according to CBS News. It is unknown whether the explosion was related to the flooding.

The home appeared unoccupied at the time, and no injuries were reported, per CBS. According to [USA Today](#), a preliminary investigation suggested that the explosion was due to a gas leak.

Why do flash floods seem to have become more common?

While no single weather event can be tied directly to human causes, [the scientific consensus](#) has been that, as global temperatures rise, the magnitude of severe weather events will increase due largely to warmer air holding more moisture, making these storms more destructive.

Warmer temperatures can lead to more evaporation and humidity, and more moisture in the air can lead to more intense rainfall and, in turn, more [flash floods](#). Even slightly higher totals of rain beyond the normal in an area can overwhelm existing drainage infrastructure and cause low-lying areas to accumulate water very quickly.

[A study by Climate Central](#) found that, from 1970 to 2022, rainfall intensity at 150 weather stations across the U.S. increased by an average of 13%.

Increased rainfall intensity means more flash floods and more flood destruction. From 1988 to 2017, rain-induced flash floods caused \$73 billion in damage, [Climate Central found](#).

ProPublica made a [stark comparison](#) between recent years and decades past: "In the United States, which prefers to measure its losses in dollars, the damage from major storms was more than \$180 billion last year, nearly 10 times the average annual toll during the 1980s, after accounting for inflation. These storms have now cost Americans nearly \$3 trillion. Meanwhile, the number of annual major disasters has grown sevenfold."

This damage destroys lives and livelihoods, wrecks businesses, damages homes, and disrupts local communities forever. Even far from disaster areas, people feel the impact in rising insurance premiums and, often, increases in the prices of certain commodities.

What's being done about flash floods?

While fully addressing rising temperatures will require a global effort that brings together government, industry, and private individuals, there is plenty that can be done at the local level both to reduce the amount of heat-trapping pollution entering the atmosphere and to make homes and communities more resilient.

For example, [taking public transit](#), [driving an EV](#), or [installing solar](#) on your home all can reduce planet-warming pollution, while often saving money, too.

Further, installing solar with a home-battery system will reduce the amount of pollution your household generates while also making your home more resilient in the event of a power outage. An EV can help with that too, as many EVs these days can provide vehicle-to-home charging with the right adapter kit.

[EnergySage](#) offers a free tool that makes it easy to compare quotes from vetted solar and home battery installers in your area, saving customers up to \$10,000 in the process through government tax credits that expire later this year.

— Social Copy —

Please use the skeletal outline below as a blueprint when adapting your web copy to the template for this assignment. If you have any questions about any elements of the template or any aspect of the social assignment, please contact your assignment editor.

— Cover Slide —

Title max: 50 characters

Tagline max: 30 characters

Title should communicate the subject of the post and align with TCD voice

House Explodes Amid Jersey Floods, Cause Unknown
“Pretty Scary”

— Body Slide —

Bullet max: 110 characters

Provide 4-5 bullets

Preface bullets with emojis

Each bullet should be a standalone sentence and contain no periods; semicolons, such as this one here, are OK

Good example here: https://www.instagram.com/p/DFGYJUZO303/?img_index=1

 **A New Jersey home exploded amid flash floods, ripping off the front of the house and leaving it in flames**

 Officials had not identified a cause for the explosion but said that no injuries had been reported

 Firefighters heard about the home explosion while rescuing people trapped in their vehicles during flash floods

 Parts of northern New Jersey received as much as 6.5 inches of rain within several hours

 Two women were feared drowned after floodwaters swept their vehicle into a brook