

Karst flash floods

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Flash floods constitute one of the deadliest and costliest natural disasters worldwide, especially in the Mediterranean region. This paper explains the karst flash flood phenomenon, which represents a special kind of flash flood. As the majority of flash floods karst flash floods are caused by intensive short-term precipitation in an area whose surface rarely exceeds a few square kilometres. The characteristics of all flash floods are their short duration, small areal extent, high flood peaks and rapid flows, and heavy loss of life and property. Karst flash floods have specific characteristics due to special conditions for water circulation, which exist in karst terrains. During karst flash floods a sudden rise of groundwater levels occurs, which causes the appearance of numerous, unexpected, abundant and temporary karst springs.