

Are You Ready? Emergency Flood Planning Checklist

Forecasters are predicting serious flooding in some regions this spring. It is important to be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even a very small stream or dry creek bed can overflow and create flooding. Here are some advance steps you can take to increase safety and lessen the impact of the disaster.

Prepare an Emergency Flood Kit

Put together a portable emergency flood kit that you can take with you if directed to evacuate. Your emergency flood kit should contain essential supplies to cover a minimum of three days.

- battery or crank-operated radio and batteries
- first aid kit/supplies
- prescription medicine
- a whistle
- copies of important documents in a plastic bag (driver's license, social security card, proof of residence, insurance and bank/credit card information, family and other contact information)
- flashlight with extra batteries
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food and water
- warm clothing, sturdy shoes/boots and blankets/sleeping bags
- personal hygiene and sanitation supplies
- diapers and formula
- comfort items for children (books, games and toys)

Create a Family Emergency Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan in advance how you will contact one another and how and where you will meet.

- Identify an out-of town contact. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Complete a contact card (sample right) for each family member, which should be kept handy in a wallet, purse, backpack, etc. You may want to send one to school with each child to keep on file. A copy should also be included in your flood kit (see above).
- Teach family members how to use text messaging as text messages can often get around network disruptions.
- Subscribe to alert services. Many communities have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc. Sign up by visiting your local Office of Emergency Management web site. To create your own

Other Important Phone Numbers & Information:

Family Communications Plan	
Contact Name:	
Telephone:	
Out-of-State Contact Name:	
Telephone:	
Neighborhood Meeting Place:	
Meeting Place Telephone:	
Dial 9-1-1 for Emergencies!	

comprehensive, printable Family Emergency Plan, visit
<http://ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/fep/index.jsp>.

Prepare to Evacuate

- Make a record of your personal property. Take photos or a video of the interior and exterior of your home.
- Store important documents such as insurance policies, deeds, property records, and other important papers in a safe place, such as a safety deposit box away from your home. Make copies of important documents for your flood kit (see above).
- Be informed! Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for information or official instruction as it becomes available. In the event of an evacuation, pay attention to the approved evacuation routes. Monitor local road conditions and obey closure signs. NEVER drive through flooded areas!
- Be ready to relocate animals and livestock. Ensure there is food and water available.
- Store valuables and electronics higher on the ground floor, on the second story, or in your attic.
- Keep hazardous chemicals out of floodwaters.
- Learn how to use sandbags and locate where you can buy or get them ahead of time.
- Ensure that your sub pump is in working condition. Consider purchasing a backup pump in the event of equipment failure.
- Move vehicles and equipment to higher ground
- Keep storm drains free of leaves and debris.

Buy Flood Insurance Now

If you live in a flood-prone area, consider purchasing flood insurance to reduce your risk of flood loss. Standard insurance policies often do not cover flood damage. Remember, it generally takes 30 days for the flood policy to take effect. Contact your insurance agent NOW to review your existing coverage.

After a Flood

What do you do after your home or business has been flooded? Follow these tips from the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

- Wait for the water to go down before entering your home.
- Report downed power lines and gas leaks immediately.
- Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box. If you have to step in water to get to your electric box, call an electrician.
- Turn off the gas if you have gas appliances. Then clean the mud out of the pilot and burners.
- Check for structural damage.
- Check the ceiling for signs of sagging. Poke a hole at the edge of the sag to drain water.
- Find and protect the "irreplaceable" valuables such as money, jewelry, insurance papers, photographs and family heirlooms. Then freeze them in plastic bags to protect them from mildew and further damage.
- Circulate air through your home by opening windows.
- Patch holes in the roof, walls or windows with boards, tarps or plastic sheeting

□ **Seeking Disaster Assistance**

Throughout the recovery period, it is important to monitor local radio or television reports and other media sources for information about where to get emergency housing, food, first aid, clothing, and financial assistance. Direct assistance to individuals and families may come from any number of organizations, including:

- American Red Cross: 800-REDCROSS (800-733-2767) www.redcross.org.
- Salvation Army www.salvationarmyusa.org.
- Other volunteer organizations.

These organizations provide food, shelter, supplies and assist in clean-up efforts.

In the most severe disasters, the federal government is also called in to help individuals and families with temporary housing, counseling (for post-disaster trauma), low-interest loans and grants, and other assistance. The federal government also has programs that help small businesses and farmers.

Most federal assistance becomes available when the President of the United States declares a “Major Disaster” for the affected area at the request of a state governor. FEMA will provide information through the media and community outreach about federal assistance and how to apply. FEMA contact information: 800-621-FEMA (3362) or online at www.fema.gov.