

Flood

Preparedness Checklist

Flooding is a temporary overflow of water onto land that is normally dry. Floods can result from rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges, overflows of rivers, and dam failure. Floods can be dangerous. People die by drowning when they don't evacuate before floodwaters come or when they enter floodwaters. Floods can damage buildings and roads, cause power outages, and create landslides. Floodwaters carry waste and pollute drinking water. Flooding can develop slowly or quickly. Flash floods can be sudden and violent. Climate change increases our risk of many types of flooding. But we can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself and your loved ones.



What to Do: Before



Understand Your Flood Risk

- Learn about the types of flooding that can impact your home and community. Types of flooding include flash floods, river floods, storm surges, coastal floods, burn scars, debris flows, ice/debris jams, snowmelt, dry wash, dam breaks, and levee failures.
- Reach out to your local office of emergency management for advice.
- Know your home and community's flood risk. Visit the FEMA Flood Map Service Center and search for your home using your address.

- River floods: Know if you are in an area that is prone to river floods. Review your evacuation plan so that you can leave quickly if officials advise you to evacuate.
- Storm surge: Be prepared to evacuate immediately if local officials advise. A storm surge can cause water levels to rise quickly and flood large areas in just minutes.
- Coastal flooding: Be prepared to evacuate immediately if local officials advise. Move inland before flooding begins.



Make Plans to Stay Safe

- Flash floods can be sudden and violent. You may have little to no warning. Designate a place on higher ground that you can get to quickly. Plan to move to higher ground before flooding begins.



Turn Around! Don't Drown!

- Never walk, swim, or drive through floodwater. Just 6 in (15 cm) of fast-moving floodwater can knock you over, and 12 in (30 cm) can carry your vehicle away.

What to Do: During

What to Do: After



Prevent Injuries

- Understand the dangers you may face and keep your loved ones safe.
- If you evacuated, wait for officials to say it is safe before going home.
- Avoid fallen power lines, poles, and wires. They can electrocute you.
- Watch out for falling trees and other debris.
- Use flashlights or battery-powered lanterns, rather than candles, to reduce fire risk.
- Many injuries happen during cleanup. Wear protective equipment, like boots, long pants, work gloves, eyewear, and an N95 respirator to protect your lungs. Follow the advice of local public health officials.
- Learn how to use equipment safely. Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water because you could get electrocuted.
- Cleaning up is a big job. Take care of yourself. Work with a partner and take frequent breaks.



Protect Your Health

- Flooding can contaminate drinking water. Check with your local public health department about drinking water safety.
- Don't get sick from eating spoiled food. Throw out food that got wet or warm. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Stay away from floodwaters. They may contain sewage, sharp items, and chemicals that can make you ill.



Take Care of Yourself

- If your home was flooded:
 - If possible, dry your home and everything in it as quickly as you can within 24 to 48 hours.
 - If you cannot return to dry your home within 24 to 48 hours, you should assume you have mold growth. When it is safe to return home, completely dry everything, clean up the mold and make sure you don't still have a moisture problem.
- Keep wet areas well-ventilated. Throw away wet materials that can't be repaired or dried.
- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices should never be used inside a home, basement, garage, tent, or camper – or even outside near an open window. Carbon monoxide can't be seen or smelled, but it can kill you fast. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak, get to fresh air right away – do not delay.
- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text **1-800-985-5990**.

Prepare so you can protect.

| For more information, visit redcross.org/prepare

| Download the Emergency App

