



Are You Ready for a Flood or a Flash Flood?

Here's what you can do to prepare for such emergencies

Know what to expect

- ✓ Know your area's flood risk—if unsure, call your local Red Cross chapter.
- ✓ If it has been raining hard for several hours, or steadily raining for several days, be alert to the possibility of a flood.
- ✓ Listen to local radio or TV stations for flood information.
- ✓ Floods can take several hours to days to develop—
 - A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area.
 - A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.
- ✓ Flash floods can take only a few minutes to a few hours to develop—
 - A flash flood WATCH means flash flooding is possible in your area.
 - A flash flood WARNING means a flash flood is occurring or will occur very soon.

Prepare a Home Flood Plan

- ✓ Check your homeowner's or renter's insurance to see if it covers flooding. If not, find out how to get flood insurance.
- ✓ Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.
- ✓ Assemble a Flood Safety Kit containing—
 - First aid kit
 - Canned food and can opener
 - Bottled water
 - Rubber boots and rubber gloves
 - Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- ✓ Identify where you could go if told to evacuate. Choose several places . . . a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter.

When a flood WATCH is issued . . .

- ✓ Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home.
- ✓ Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation notice is issued.

When a flood WARNING is issued . . .

- ✓ Listen to local radio and TV stations for information and advice. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible.

When a flash flood WATCH is issued . . .

- ✓ Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.

When a flash flood WARNING is issued . . .

- ✓ Or if you think it has already started, evacuate immediately. You may have only seconds to escape. Act quickly!
- ✓ Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains. Do not drive around barricades . . . they are there for your safety.
- ✓ If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

Prolonged rainfall over several days can cause a river or stream to overflow and flood the surrounding area. A flash flood from a broken dam or levee or after intense rainfall of one inch (or more) per hour often catches people unprepared.

Regardless, the rule for being safe is simple: head for the high ground and stay away from the water. Even a shallow depth of fast-moving flood water produces more force than most people imagine. The most dangerous thing you can do is to try walking, swimming, or driving through such swift water.

Still, you can take steps to prepare for these types of emergencies. Have various members of the family do each of the items on the checklist below. Then hold a family meeting to discuss and finalize your Home Flood Plan.

___ Determine whether you're in a flood area.

Flood area: yes no

___ If in a flood area, is flooding covered under your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy?

Flood insurance: yes no

___ If flooding is not covered under your homeowner's or renter's policy, flood insurance is available from:

___ Keep current copies of all important papers and valuables in a safe-deposit box.

Location of safe-deposit box: _____

___ Put together a Flood Safety Kit in a clearly labeled, easy-to-grab box.

Location of Flood Safety Kit: _____

___ Write instructions on how and when to turn off your utilities—electricity, gas, and water.

Instructions written: _____

(date)

___ Decide where your family would go in case you must evacuate. Clear your plan with the relatives or friends you plan to stay with—or go to a Red Cross shelter. Also, get an extra map and mark two alternate ways to reach that destination. Add the map to your Flood Safety Kit.

Evacuation plan completed: _____

(date)

And remember . . . when a tornado, earthquake, flood, fire, or other emergency happens in your community, you can count on your local American Red Cross chapter to be there to help you and your family. That's been our role for more than 100 years.