



Floods are one of the most common, and most costly, natural disasters. Preparing now for flood situations can minimize injury to yourself and your family and speed the recovery process.

## Before a Flood

- **Be prepared for the possible disruption of services for extended periods of time, including electric, phone and local food and water sources.**
- **Prepare an emergency kit:**
  - Food, water and necessities for all members of the family to last 3 to 5 days
  - Any medications needed for family members
  - First aid kit, battery powered radio, flashlight with extra batteries
  - Sleeping bags or blankets, and extra clothing
  - Important family documents (e.g., insurance policies, emergency contact numbers)
  - Water-purifying supplies (e.g., chlorine tablets, or unscented, household chlorine bleach)
- **Family communication and evacuation plan.**
  - Know how you will contact each other if you are in separate locations or establish a location to meet.
  - Have an out-of-state relative or friend serve as the family contact person.
  - Learn the evacuation routes and locations of emergency shelters in your area.

## During a Flood

- **Gather your emergency supplies.**
- **Stay informed.**
  - Listen to the radio or television for situation developments, evacuation instructions and routes, and road closures.
- **Never ignore an evacuation order for the safety of you and your family.**
- **If you have time,**
  - Disconnect electrical appliances to prevent electrical shock when power is restored.
  - Turn off the gas, electricity and water as the main switches or valves.
  - Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- **Follow evacuation routes; expect heavy traffic.**
- **Avoid floodwaters.**
  - Water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewage, harmful bacteria or electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.

- **Do not walk through moving water.**
  - If water is above your ankles, turn around and go another way; as little as 6 inches of water can sweep you off your feet.
- **Do not drive in flooded areas.**
  - Most flood-associated deaths are related to vehicle incidents.
  - As little as six inches of water will cause loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float most vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles.
  - If flood waters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground.

## After a Flood

- **Only return home after officials have declared the area safe.**
- **Cleanup safely.**
  - Wear protective clothing, (rubber gloves, boots).
  - Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, or make ice.
  - Use caution with gas powered equipment – dangerous carbon monoxide can be generated.
  - Be aware of hazards that may cause injury to you or others cleaning up, (e.g., chain saws, pressure washers, electrical or chemical hazards, heat exposure).
- **Prevent and treat injuries.**
  - Exposure to floodwaters in cold weather can lead to hypothermia.
  - Extreme heat can lead to heat stress or exhaustion.
  - Take precautions to minimize insect exposures.
- **Prevent illness.**
  - Wash hand frequently – especially after contacting flood water or contaminated items.
  - Use clean, boiled or disinfected water; if no water is available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used.
- **Food and water safety.**
  - Throw away any food that may have come in contact with flood water.
  - Throw away perishable foods that have been unrefrigerated for 2 or more hours.
  - When in doubt, throw it out!
- **Use safe water (e.g., bottled, boiled or treated) for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene.**
  - Wells may be contaminated following floods.
  - Boil or treat water for drinking and cooking until authorities tell you that your water supply is safe.

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