

Flood Survival

Severe storms can cause landslides, uprooted trees, downed utility lines, and flooding. Some floods develop slowly, sometimes over a period of days. But flash floods can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live, but especially if you live in a low-lying area, near water, or downstream from a dam.



If a flood is imminent, do the following:

- Tune in to local radio or TV channels for emergency advisories and instructions.
- Find out what number to call in your local area for information on free sandbags to protect your property from flooding.
- Have emergency food, water and supplies on hand.
- If water has entered a garage or basement, do not walk through it - it may contain hazardous materials.
- Remove or seal hazardous products like weed killers and insecticides.
- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you must walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Stay clear of water that is in contact with downed power lines.
- Do not allow children to play around high water, storm drains, or any flooded areas.
- Move furniture, electrical appliances and other belongings to higher levels.
- If you are asked to leave your property, shut off electric circuits. If advised by your local utility, shut off gas service as well.

While Driving:

- A car is a bit like a boat when it comes to floodwaters. It has a large bottom surface area and a fairly hollow inside, and can be moved by water easier than most people think. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float many vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.
- Follow the routes specified by officials. Don't take short cuts. They could lead you to a blocked or dangerous area.
- Travel very carefully, and only if absolutely necessary, through flooded areas. Roads may be washed away or covered with water. If you come across a barricade or a flooded road, take a different route.
- If you are caught in fast rising waters and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and your passengers.
- Keep listening to the radio for information.
- Emergency workers will be busy assisting people in flooded areas. Help them by staying out of the way.

Returning Home After Flooding:

Be careful when re-entering your home after a flood. Floodwater may be heavily contaminated with sewage and other pollutants that can pose a serious health hazard. Take the following precautions:

- Check for foundation damage before entering a building that was flooded, and make sure all porch roofs and overhangs are supported.
- Do not strike a match or use an open flame. Use a flashlight to inspect for inside damage.
- If your basement is full of water, drain in stages, about a third of the volume of water per day (draining too quickly can structurally damage your home).
- Turn off the electricity at the main breaker or fuse box by using a dry piece of wood.
- Wear rubber gloves, rubber boots and protective eyewear when cleaning up.
- Do not use wet appliances or motors unless they have been serviced by a qualified electrician.
- Contact your local heating repair company to inspect your furnace and chimney.
- Dispose of all contaminated food.
- Check your newspaper or listen to your radio or television for information about help that may be available.

Reference

One-Stop Survival Preparedness Guide

(<http://www.one-stop-survival-guide.com/floods.html>)