

Best practices to be prepared

There are a number of things you can do to prepare for a flash flood. But most importantly, you should be aware of practical steps to take when a flash flood is imminent.

Preparation in advance

- Discuss with your family where everyone should go if they have to leave due to hazardous storms.
- Place insurance policies and valuables in a safe-deposit box to help prevent flood damage.
- If possible, raise your electric panel to higher floors if they are currently in areas that could be flooded.
- Install check valves to building sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage through cracks.
- Download an app on your phone such as **the Red Cross's app** specifically designed for flood related warnings and tips, or for a more general weather alert you may consider any free weather alert app.
- Discuss your insurance options with your agent. You'll likely need a flood insurance to protect your home and property as flash flood is often not covered by your homeowners' policy.
- Changing the landscaping to get water flowing away from the house is sometimes as easy as bringing in some dirt next to the house and getting the ground to pitch away from the house.
- Have your sump pump serviced quarterly or after a heavy storm to insure proper drainage.
- Invest in a battery power back-up sump pump in case of power failure, breakdowns, or when the primary pump simply can't handle the water flow from a major storm.



When a flash flood is imminent

- Fill bathtubs, sinks and water bottles with clean water in case of contamination or service disruption.
- Fill your vehicle's gas tank in case of evacuation.
- Move furniture and valuables to the highest point in your house to help avoid damage.
- Bring your outdoor furniture and other belongings inside.
- Tune into your local station or the National Weather Service alerts for updates for your specific area.

A **Flash Flood Watch** means that there is a high possibility for a flash flood, and you should be ready to act at a moment's notice and evacuate if needed, especially if you are in a flood-prone area because it can happen incredibly quickly.

A **Flash Flood Warning** means that it either is already occurring or is imminent, and you should move to a higher ground immediately.



During a flash flood

- Be aware of areas that are considered high risk in the event of a flash flood and try avoiding them, including:
 - Close proximity to a stream;
 - Highly populated areas without sufficient ground for absorbing heavy rainfall;
 - Construction sites including buildings, parking lots and/or highways;
 - Low spots such as underground parking lots and basements;
 - Overwhelmed storm drains.
- Avoid contact with any flood water as it could be contaminated with raw sewage, oil or gasoline or could be charged from electrical wires.
- If you are on foot, be aware that you could lose footing or be swept away in just six inches of moving water.
- If you're swept away by the water:
 - Try to make sure your feet are pointed downstream;
 - Make every effort to go over obstacles rather than under them.
- Do not drive into flooded roadways or through flowing water of unknown depths.
- If your vehicle is flooded, roll down the window and try getting to a higher ground immediately. If your window won't open, allow the car to fill up with water, which will then allow you to open the door easier.
- If you need to evacuate, follow the instructions of local authorities who are the most informed about the rapidly changing conditions in the affected areas.

After a flash flood

- Throw away food that could have been contaminated by bacteria from the flood.
- If entering buildings after flooding, especially if there is still water inside, be extra careful because the integrity of the foundation can be compromised:
 - Inspect the building for structural issues to make sure it is safe to enter and still habitable, which would include checking for hanging drywalls and ceilings, cracked floors and the stability of staircases.
- Fire is the most frequent hazard after a flood, which is often caused by gas leaks or electric damage in affected buildings:
 - If you smell gas, open a window and leave promptly. Make sure to contact your local authorities or utility company.
- Similarly, if you notice a flooded electrical circuit/appliance, don't step into the water because you could be electrocuted. Contact your local authorities.
- Flood can also damage sewage and waterlines. If you suspect damage, avoid using your toilet, or drinking water from the tap and contact your utility company. Boil drinking water if it is questionable, or you can melt ice for drinking that has not been in contact with flood water.

A photograph of a road completely flooded with brown, murky water. A yellow diamond-shaped sign on the right side of the road reads "WHEN FLOODED TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN". The road is flanked by white fences and trees. The sky is overcast.

Do you really know
how deep and fast
the water is?

Turn Around
Don't Drown®

For important, life-saving information please visit
<http://tadd.weather.gov>

National Weather Service U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators FLASH FLOODING: TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN



DON'T LET A FLASH FLOOD TAKE YOU BY SURPRISE: TIPS TO BE PREPARED

Flash flood and its dangers

Flash flooding occurs when it rains heavily on either saturated or very dry soil with poor absorption ability or in low-lying areas. It can form within just minutes of high intensity rain with little or no advance warning. This is especially a problem when there are multiple slow moving storms in the same area.

Flash flooding is extremely dangerous because water gathers quickly and moves fast – often carrying debris, or causing mud slides, which can trap unsuspecting people who underestimate or are not aware of the flash flood's risks. Ultimately it can claim lives, damage houses, roads and property.

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