**FLOOD SAFETY**

**About**

Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters. Flooding often occurs following a hurricane, thawing snow, or several days of sustained rain. Flash floods occur suddenly, due to rapidly rising water along a stream or low-lying area. Learn what to do to keep your loved ones safe!

**Know the Difference!**

A flood/flash flood WATCH means a flood or flash flood is possible.

A flood/flash flood WARNING means flooding or flash flooding is already occurring or will occur soon. TAKE IMMEDIATE PRECAUTIONS!

**BEFORE**

**Prepare in Advance**

Be sure you're Red Cross Ready. That means:

* Assembling an emergency preparedness kit.
* Creating a household evacuation plan that includes your pets.
* Staying informed about your community’s risk and response plans.
* Educating your family on how to use the Safe and Well website.
* **Download the Emergency App for iPhone >> or for Android >>**

**How to Prepare Before a Flood**

Protecting Your Family

* Talk with your family about what to do if a flood watch or warning is issued. Discussing floods ahead of time helps reduce fear, especially for younger children.
* Ensure that every member of your family carries a Safe and Well wallet card.
* Make sure you have access to NOAA radio broadcasts:
* Find an online NOAA radio station
* Search for a NOAA radio app in the Apple Store or Google Play
* Purchase a battery-powered or hand-crank NOAA radio in the Red Cross Store
* Find out if you are located in a floodplain, which is considered a Special Flood Hazard Area. If so, you are still eligible for flood insurance. Check with your city or county government (start with the Building or Planning Department) to review the Flood Insurance Rate Maps, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
* Find out if local streams or rivers flood easily.
* Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box. You may need quick, easy access to these documents. Keep them in a safe place less likely to be damaged during a flood. Take pictures on a phone and keep copies of important documents and files on a flashdrive that you can carry with you on your house or car keys.

Protecting Your Pets & Animals

* Prepare a pet emergency kit for your companion animals.
* Ensure that any outbuildings, pastures, or corrals are protected in the same way as your home.
* If installing or changing fence lines, consider placing them in such a way that your animals are able to move to higher ground in the event of flooding.

**Protecting Your Home**

If you live in a floodplain, elevate and reinforce your home to make damage less likely during a flood.

Check with a professional to:

* Raise your furnace, water heater, and electric panel to floors that are less likely to be flooded. An undamaged water heater may be your best source of fresh water after a flood.
* Install check valves in plumbing to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home. (As a last resort, when floods threaten, use large corks or stoppers to plug showers, tubs, or basins.)
* Construct barriers such as levees, berms, and flood walls to stop floodwater from entering the building (if permitted by local building codes).
* Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage through cracks.

Use sand bags when flooding is expected:

* It takes two people about one hour to fill and place 100 sandbags, creating a wall one foot high and 20 feet long.
* Make sure you have enough sand, burlap or plastic bags, shovels, strong helpers, and time to place them properly.
* If a flood is expected, some communities will offer free sandbags to residents. Be sure to watch or listen to the news so you can access these resources.