

FLOODS



Floods occur regularly across the country, causing evacuations, widespread damage and even death. Those living near waterways or other low-lying areas are most at risk, but anyone in a community susceptible to flooding can be affected. Hazards range from potentially deadly flash flooding to water contamination due to broken gasoline or sewer lines.

Before a Flood

- Consider purchasing flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. Regular homeowners' insurance does not cover flood losses.
- Know how to get to higher ground from your home.
- Learn your community's flood evacuation routes.
- Ask local officials how you can protect your home.

Terms to Know

Flood Watch

Flooding is possible within 12 to 36 hours.

Flash Flood Watch

Flash flooding is possible and could occur without warning. Prepare to move to higher ground if you are at risk.

Flood Warning

Flooding is or soon will be occurring. Evacuate immediately if advised.

Flash Flood Warning

Flash flooding is occurring. Move to higher ground at once if you are at risk.

Protecting Your Property

- If your home is prone to flooding, move your furnace, water heater and electric panel to higher floors.
- Install “check valves” in sewer traps to prevent water from backing up into your house.
- Waterproof your basement walls to stop seepage.
- Build barriers such as floodwalls or levees to keep out floodwater.
- Store insurance policies, deeds and other records in a safe-deposit box.

During a Flood

- Stay tuned to radio or TV for updates.
- Watch for flash flooding. This can occur without rain clouds or rain in the immediate area.
- Avoid low-lying areas such as canyons and drainage channels.
- Never walk through moving water more than 6 inches deep.
- Do not drive through flooded areas.
- If your vehicle stalls in water, exit it and move to higher ground.
- Evacuate if instructed to by authorities, and return home only when they say it's safe.

Did You Know
Cars can be easily swept away in just 2 feet of moving water.

After a Flood

- Be careful in areas where floodwaters have receded.
- Watch for downed electrical lines and weakened roads and bridges.
- Stay out of flooded buildings.
- Use caution when entering damaged structures. Their foundations may have weakened.
- Avoid coming into contact with floodwater—it may be contaminated. Wash your hands if they get wet.
- Discard any food that has been in contact with floodwater.

Beware of Landslides

- Look for changes in the landscape, such as small slides; leaning trees, poles or fences; widening cracks in the driveway or street; or the ground bulging out at the base of a slope or hill.
- Be prepared to evacuate if you feel threatened.
- While driving, watch for signs like fallen rocks and mud in the roadway. Embankments along roadsides can slide with little or no notice.
- Move quickly away from the path of the slide.
- If you cannot escape, curl into a ball and protect your head.

