

Disaster Checklist: Flood

A before, during and after review of steps you can take in the case of a Flood emergency situation.

This document is a quick reference to help prepare for the possibilities of a flood. It is designed to go along with the associated post, "Flood Preparedness," at <https://www.changingworldproject.com/flood-preparedness/>

Please remember, any disaster scenario will have unique variables. This list is meant to be a guide. It is not a replacement for your research and common sense when making decisions. Only complete recommended tasks from the list if it makes sense in your scenario and feels safe to do so. You are responsible for your own actions and choices so make them wisely and consider researching other resources outside of this checklist. A lot of Government and NGO's have excellent information available on floods. We referenced the following in preparing this list:

www.ready.gov.ca

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/flood.html>

<https://www.floodsmart.gov/flood/first-prepare-for-flooding>

You can learn more about emergency & disaster preparedness and how to plan for some of the challenges and opportunities in our changing world and climate at <https://www.changingworldproject.com>

BEFORE // WHEN A FLOOD IS POSSIBLE

Do these things now, when there is calm and safe opportunity to do so. These steps will be extra work to do if you wait for an actual emergency situation.

- Make sure ease-troughs are free from debris and drain away from your property's foundation.
- Check that you have a sump pump for draining your flooded basement. Make sure it still works and has a battery back-up so you can shut off the electricity to avoid the risk of electrical shock while still draining the basement.
- Check to see what kind of flood insurance you have.
- Take photos of your home and all valuable items.
- Store important documents in a waterproof container.
- Map your evacuation route and have a plan B in case it is closed.
- Know the difference between a Flood Watch & A Flood Warning. A quick internet search will reveal this.
- Anchor down all fuel tanks and outdoor furniture that can not be brought inside.
- Remove chemicals, gasoline, paints, etc. from low spaces up onto higher ground.
- Research whether your community has a flood evacuation plan
- Make sure your sewer lines have a "check valve" or "one-way valve" to prevent sewage from backing up into your home.
- Discuss flood safety and response with your family and neighbors.
- Just before, fill up your bathtub with clean water as well as any other containers you have. Also, fill freezer bags and place in the freezer. Once frozen they may slow your freezer from warming if power is out for a prolonged period.

These are some less often thought of preparedness steps that could be game changers if a flood came to your community:

- Take a white-water rescue course. These are often designed for white water canoe paddlers, but the training would be very relevant in flood situations.
- Take your lifeguard training. Even if you have zero interest in being a lifeguard, this is valuable training if you ever need to assist or lead a rescue around water.
- Plant trees and shrubs that absorb a lot of water. If you live in a flood-prone area, consider planting willow trees and shrubs and dogwood shrubs. These species consume an incredible amount of water and can help mitigate against smaller floods in some circumstances. **Be aware of that willow roots can damage septic systems and underground pipes so plant them away from infrastructure.
- Research the roles of wetlands in both preventing floods and cleaning water of toxins.
- Make a map of your neighborhood and mark low areas more susceptible to flooding. Consider your evacuation routes or people you may want to go check on during an emergency. Are there low areas on the route that you should plan around?
- Audit the drainage of your property and consider how it relates to the overall slope and drainage of the surrounding community. Can you better direct water across your property and away from your home? Could you work with your neighbors to improve the drainage and water flow of your community?

DURING // WHEN A FLOOD IS LIKELY OR OCCURING

Take these steps when the disaster is in effect, or a flood WARNING has been issued. Keep in mind this is the part where your unique situation will call for extra steps. Do your best, stay calm, and be safe.

- Avoid moving through any moving flood waters.
- If trapped in a car in moving water with no risk of immediate drowning, stay in the car and use whistle & phone to signal for help.

- If trapped in a car filling with water get on the roof with your emergency bag. Use the whistle to signal for help.
- If you have no choice but to move through waters (not recommended), consider:
 - Wearing a life vest if possible.
 - Carry a throw rope and whistle.
 - Protect your skin, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, midsection from contact with flood waters.
 - Walk with a stick and feel for debris in front of you.
 - Be incredibly aware of changes in the water current, rising water, and electrical or chemical risks. (A significant number of flood deaths occur from people trying to travel through moving flood waters that they presume to not be that strong of a current.)
 - Be aware of snakes and other animals that could now be in the flood waters.
 - Be aware of the risk of electrical shock from downed or damaged electrical wires (both in streets and in your basement)
 - If safe, turn off gas and electricity in your home to reduce the risk of electrical shock, explosions, and fires.

AFTER // WHEN A FLOOD HAS OCCURED

Take these steps after the flood has passed, or the Flood Warning has been lifted.

- Have gas and electrical inspected before turning back on.
- Disinfect everything that has come into contact with flood water. Anything porous may need to be discarded.
- Wear safety equipment including a face mask or respirator while doing clean-up. Mold is a severe health threat after a flood.

- Have your plumbing and well sanitized afterward if there is any chance they were contaminated.
- Reflect on your lessons learned and update your emergency kit and plans as appropriate.
- Share your lessons and questions in the comments of our article at: <https://www.changingworldproject.com/flood-preparedness/>

Flood Preparedness Kits

Consider having a flood preparedness kit for all your vehicles and for your home. The vehicle kit should include items in case you get trapped in your car or in flood waters as well as items for if you need to leave your vehicle and travel on foot. The home kit (next page) should include items to prevent or reduce damages as well as things to help you respond and recover.

Check out our Gear Store on the changing World website to find links and info on some of these emergency kit components.

Car Kit

- A whistle to signal for help
- Road flares to mark dangers or signal for help
- A long length of rope to anchor things down or use during a rescue (self or others)
- Chains in case your car needs to get towed.
- First Aid Kit with disinfectants and hand sanitizers if you are exposed to flood water with emergency eyewash kit in case you get flood water in your eyes
- Car escape tool if your doors and windows won't open or your seatbelt gets jammed.
- Rain gear
- waterproof work gloves and eye protection
- Emergency blanket, we recommend a Sol Bivvy Bag
- Flashlight
- Bug spray (there can be an increased risk of vector-borne diseases after a flood)
- Water & Food Cache

Home Kit

- Dehumidifier and fans. Getting things dry fast is essential in preventing mold.
- Disinfectants such as bleach, mold spray, rubbing alcohol, vinegar, etc. for post-flood cleaning.
- Post-flood personal safety equipment - Thick waterproof gloves, waterproof boots, a face mask/respirator, eye protection, etc.
- Duct Tape - many uses
- Extra plywood, rolls of plastic, hammer, and nails
- 100'+ of rope
- Have a hand crank or battery-operated radio with the NOAA Weatherband

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