



# Guide to Flood Safety

# Flood Safety Tips

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States, but not all floods are the same. Some develop slowly, while flash floods can appear out of nowhere, without visible signs of rain. Floods can occur from a variety of catalysts, including heavy rainfall, overflowing rivers, or dam failure.

Because floods are not limited to a particular geographic area, it's important to have an emergency flood plan, no matter where you live. You may be especially vulnerable to floods if you live in low-lying areas, near water, or downstream from a dam. Even very small bodies of water that appear harmless in dry weather, such as streams, gullies, and creeks can pose a flood threat in certain conditions. Make sure you and your family know the bodies of water around your home, and be sure to have an emergency flood plan in place.

If a flood occurs and your area is told to evacuate, make sure to take important items with you. Fill your car with a full tank of gas, and take an emergency kit with you. You should gather important documents, such as medical records, insurance cards, and government identification, and store them in a waterproof case or bag. Before leaving the house, turn your refrigerator and thermostat to the coldest temperatures possible to help preserve food or other perishable materials in your home in case the power goes off while you're gone. Before a flood threatens your home, your family should have a flood evacuation plan and route in place. That way, instead of panicking in the face of this natural disaster, you can keep calm, knowing you have a plan in place.

# How to Prepare Your Home

Even if you don't live near a body of water, your home might still be vulnerable to flooding. Floods can be devastating, but there are steps you can take beforehand to help sturdy your home against the natural disaster. Here are some tips to help secure your home against flooding:

## Water Heater

Elevate your water heater if you live in an area with high flood risk. You can relocate your hot water tank to the first floor instead of the basement, or you can elevate it on a cement pedestal. Consult your local building department for recommendations in your area.

## Check Valves

Install check valves (or backflow valves) in your pipes to prevent water from backing up into the drains of your home. This should help prevent contaminated water from flowing back up your pipes, and it may help protect your home if any pipes become damaged or broken.

## Barriers

Construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering your home. You should build barriers with water-resistant materials, which includes marine plywood, greenboard, rigid insulation, synthetic baseboards, metal doors and frames, sandbags, brick, and concrete.

## Basement Walls

Seal your basement walls with waterproofing compounds, such as Drylox or Xypex. Drylox is a waterproofer that can be applied like paint, and it expands as it dries to become part of the wall. Xypex is more like applying a layer of waterproof concrete to the surface of the wall, and it can be applied with a cement brush. Both will help prevent water from seeping through your walls.

## Sump Pumps

You should buy and install sump pumps with backup power. A sump pump is used to remove water that has accumulated, and it can be used to relatively easily restore order to a basement after flooding. The pump can relocate water from your house to a safe area, such as a storm drain or dry well.

## Bathtub

Sanitize your bathtubs and sinks with bleach, and then fill them with clean water. You might also want to fill empty plastic soda bottles. If clean water becomes scarce, you'll have a good amount for yourself and your family.

## Plug in Basement drain

Plug your basement floor drain to prevent sewage backup and to prevent the basement walls from caving in from outside pressure.

## Electrical panel

Turn off electrical power when there is standing water, fallen power lines, or before you evacuate. You can usually turn

off your electricity through a circuit breaker or main electrical panel. If you have time, turn off gas and water before you evacuate, too.

## Appliances

Disconnect all your appliances and your furnace. This will prevent electric shock if there is standing water when power is restored.

No matter where you live, you should definitely take time to prepare your home for flooding, just in case. Taking steps to help ensure the safety of your home and loved ones will give you greater peace of mind. Don't be caught off guard—have a plan and safety measures in place in case a flood affects your home.

## Conclusion

Before a flood occurs, you should make a plan for your family, keep an emergency kit handy, and fortify your home in any way you can. We hope you'll use the emergency checklists in this guide to aid in your natural disaster preparation. For more information on preparing for natural disaster and for additional safety resources for your family and community, visit [www.yourlocalsecurity.com](http://www.yourlocalsecurity.com).

# Recommended Resources

## **Protecting Your Home from Flood Damage:**

[http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/pages/Preparedness/Hazards/PDF/protecting\\_home\\_book\\_508compliant.pdf](http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/pages/Preparedness/Hazards/PDF/protecting_home_book_508compliant.pdf)

## **Home Preparedness:**

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/flood/home/preparing-a-home-that-will-be-flooded>

## **About Floods and Preparedness:**

<http://www.ready.gov/floods>

## **Key Facts and Preparedness:**

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/readiness.asp>

# Emergency Kit Checklist

Every household should have an emergency kit, and you should customize it to your family's individual needs, but here are the essentials you should include:

## Food and Water

- Water (three gallons per person, per day)
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Water purification tablets

## Communication and Tools

- Battery-powered radio
- Waterproof matches
- Flashlight with batteries
- Wrench or pliers
- Pocket knife
- Whistle

## First Aid and Hygiene

- First aid kit
- Moist sanitary wipes
- Medications

## Other

- Photocopies of important documents in a waterproof bag or container
- Cash
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Cell phone charger, inverter, or solar charger

Once you've gathered all the supplies for your emergency kit, you should put it in an easy-to-grab carrying case, such as a backpack. Keep your emergency kit in a place where it's easily accessible, and make sure the entire family knows where it's kept. You'll feel better prepared for any emergency or disasters that come your way.

Visit [www.yourlocalsecurity.com](http://www.yourlocalsecurity.com) for more disaster preparedness information.



# Emergency Communication Plans

# Emergency Contact Info

Fill out the information on this page and post it in your home or write it down on a cards for each family member to carry in their wallet, purse, briefcase, or backpack.

Home Address:

Home Phone:

(   ) -

## Parent/Guardian phone numbers

Parent 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: (   ) -

Cell: (   ) -

Work: (   ) -

Work: (   ) -

## Child contact info

List child names followed by the school they attend and cell-phone #'s, if available:

## Other Emergency Contacts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (   ) -

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (   ) -

# Meeting Plan in the Event of an Emergency

When disaster strikes, know where you are and where you're supposed to be to meet up with your family members.

**IF** you're in the house or the immediate neighborhood (backyard, front yard, garage, next door neighbor, driveway, etc).

**THEN** everyone will meet at:

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*(ex: in front of the light post outside, fire hydrant, etc.)*

**IF** you're far away from home, get in contact with your family ASAP using the *numbers on the Emergency Contact Info page*.

**IF** you're at school, follow the emergency plan that your school has in place.

School Emergency Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Emergency Pet Plan

What will you do with your pets in the event of a natural disaster?

## Important Considerations:

- Keep a current photo of your pet in case you lose them.
- Make sure ID tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar.
- Have a secure pet carrier, leash, or harness for your pet in case he/she panics.
- Take pet food, bottled water, meds, vet records, cat litter/pan, can opener, food dish, first aid kit, and other supplies you might need for your pet in an emergency situation.

Plan:

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# Emergency Plan for Seniors and Disabled Family Members

## Important Considerations

- Make sure that you've assigned someone to check on seniors or disabled neighbors.
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices they require.
- Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

Plan:

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**For more information on this  
and other natural disaster  
safety information, visit:  
[www.yourlocalsecurity.com](http://www.yourlocalsecurity.com)**