

# ARE YOU READY?



## How to get ready for floods



Many people think floods only occur during hurricanes or in areas that are close to sea level. But floods can also happen in surprising places. While most local communities do their best to prepare for floods, it is critical that people do their part to protect themselves, their families and their homes

### Before a flood

Storing supplies is important for any type of emergency. In a flood, you will either have to take shelter in your home or quickly evacuate to a shelter. So here are a few tips to help you create a plan and organize supplies.

#### Planning

- Find out if your local community has evacuation plans in case of a flood, including shelter locations, evacuation routes and emergency alert systems. Find out which roads are close to waterways, so you can avoid these in the event of an evacuation.
- Identify an out-of-state contact person in case you are separated from your family and local phone lines are jammed. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name and phone number of this person.
- Tell the police department and fire department ahead of time if you have a person living in your home who would need special assistance during a flood.
- Keep up to date on tetanus shots in case you are hurt during a flood. (Adults need a tetanus booster shot every 10 years.)
- Consider buying flood insurance, especially if you live in a high-risk area.
- If you have a basement, move valuable items off the floor.



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#### Stockpiling

- Whether you have to evacuate or stay in your home, begin by stocking up on bottled water – both gallons and smaller portable water bottles. Flood water will be full of bacteria and may poison the water supply in your home. Stock one gallon of bottled water per day per person in your house, and plan on at least three days of supplies.
- Store all supplies in a high place in your home, such as a second floor, in an attic or on a high shelf.
- Store non-perishable food in waterproof containers. If you store cans, ensure that you have a manual can opener handy.

First Aid Kit

- Make sure to store a portable first-aid kit, waterproof gloves and boots, insect repellent and a battery-powered radio.
- Store any other essential items, such as diapers or medication, in waterproof containers.
- Prepare a smaller stockpile kit in a backpack that you can take with you in case of evacuation.



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## During a flood

If evacuating, make sure to turn off the electricity (through the fuse box) as well as gas and water supplies before leaving. Cars, even SUVs, can float when flooding is deep enough! If your car gets stuck in a flood, do not open the car door. Try to climb out car windows, if possible. And do not try to cross flooded areas – the water may be deeper and moving more swiftly than it appears.

If you are sheltering in your home, you should sanitize sinks and bathtubs with bleach and fill them with water as soon as flood warnings are announced, so you have a clean source of water. Stay out of flood waters as much as possible.

## After a flood

- During cleanup, wear gloves and regularly wash hands in clean water (boiled, if from the tap) with soap.
- Do not allow children to play in flood water! It can have high levels of bacteria and cause illness. Throw away any toys that have touched flood water.
- Do not flush your toilet if flood waters are still covering your septic tank.
- Once the flood waters have been drained from your home, do not try to remove any mold yourself. Call your local health department and ask for a professional in your area to do it.
- You can make a cleaning disinfectant from one cup of bleach combined with five gallons of clean, boiled water. Try to clean any walls, floors or furniture that have had contact with flood waters.
- Upholstered furniture and mattresses should be air dried in the sun and sprayed with disinfectant, if possible.
- Steam clean rugs and replace filters in ventilation systems.
- Flooded items that cannot be cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours should be discarded.
- Protect yourself against mosquitoes that show up during floods and may carry viruses: Wear long-sleeved clothing and avoid being outdoors during dusk and dawn.

