



FLOOD

Flooding is the most frequent natural disaster and poses a threat across all geographic locations. The scope of a flood event can range from localized impacts – affecting a single neighborhood – to widespread disasters impacting entire cities, states, or territories.

While some floods develop gradually over days, allowing for preparation, flash floods are particularly dangerous as they can occur within minutes. Flash floods are often triggered by intense rainfall but can also result from structural failures such as levee breach or dam failures.



It is critical to remember that floodwaters, especially during flash flood events, can be deceptively deep and powerful. Even six inches of moving flood water can knock down an adult. These waters are highly destructive and often carry dangerous debris which can cause punctures, such as broken glass, metal, and wood, as well as chemicals, toxins, and bacteria, which can cause disease or other illnesses.

Flood Terminology

- **Flood Watch**—Flooding is possible in your area. Be prepared. Monitor weather updates via radio, television or official sources.
- **Flash Flood Watch**—Flash flooding is *possible* in your area. Flash floods develop rapidly. Be prepared to move to higher ground. Monitor weather updates closely and be ready to evacuate if necessary.
- **Flood Warning**—Flooding is *occurring* or is *imminent* in your area. Listen to instructions from local authorities.
- **Flash Flood Warning**—Flash flooding is *occurring* or is *imminent* in your area. This is a life-threatening situation. Seek higher ground *immediately* on foot.

Flood Preparedness & Response

Preparation:

- **Floodplain Awareness:** Determine if your home/workplace is in a flood zone.
- **Emergency Kit:** Assemble & store a readily accessible emergency supply kit.
- **Family Plan:** Know your installation's plan & develop a family evacuation procedure.
- **Document Possessions:** Create a personal flood file with property information (securely stored).
- **Home Mitigation:**
 - Ensure sump pump functionality (with backup power).
 - Clear gutters & downspouts.
 - Anchor fuel tanks.
 - Raise electrical components & appliances (12"+) above projected flood elevation.

Family Emergency Plan:

- **Safety Kit:** Include water, food, first aid, radio, flashlight, & blankets.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Post numbers & teach children 911.
- **Evacuation Route:** Plan & practice routes from home, work, & school to higher ground.
- **Out-of-State Contact:** Designate an emergency family contact.
- **Pet Plan:** Include pets in your evacuation plan.

- **Vehicle Fuel:** Maintain sufficient fuel for evacuation.

During a Flood:

- **Stay Informed:** Monitor radio/TV for updates & instructions.
- **Report:** If military/government personnel, report to your command after reaching safety.
- **Avoid Floodwaters:** Stay clear of standing & moving water (contamination & depth).
- **Downed Lines:** Beware of downed power lines.
- **Road Hazards:** Avoid roads with receding floodwater (potential collapse).
- **Building Safety:** Exercise extreme caution when entering buildings (unseen damage).
- **Disinfection:** Clean & disinfect flood-affected items (sewage & contaminants).
- **Evacuation if Damaged:** Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or safe location.

Evacuation Ordered:

- **Essentials Only:** Take only essential items.
- **Utilities Off:** Turn off gas, electricity, & water; disconnect appliances.
- **Avoid Moving Water:** Do not walk in floodwaters.
- **Avoid Driving:** Do not drive through floodwaters (6" can cause loss of control).
- **Follow Procedures:** Follow designated evacuation routes & procedures.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
- FloodSmart.Gov: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters>
- American Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/flood>
- Ready Army: <https://www.army.mil/ready>

It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen. These fact sheets are intended to supplement predetermined plans and policies. Follow state, local, installation and command guidance related to threats and hazards.

