

EMERGENCY GUIDE FOR FLOODS

IF FLOODS ARE FORECAST:

- Move pets, vehicles, valuables & other sentimental items and important documents to safety.
- Prepare your supply of sandbags. Some district councils can supply sandbags, but otherwise you can purchase them from builders' merchant, in an emergency create your own with pillowcases or carrier bags filled with sand or soil.
- Prepare food that you can eat without cooking, clean bottled water, warm clothes.
- Charge your mobile phone.

IF FLOODS ARE IMMINENT:

- Alert vulnerable neighbors.
- Switch off gas, electricity and water at the mains.
- Ensure sandbags or flood boards and airbrick covers are in place.
- Plug sinks / baths or low-level shower trays and weigh them down to prevent backflow.
- Store smaller electrical appliances and furniture as high as possible.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. It will be much harder at night, particularly if the electricity fails.
- In the case of flash flooding, evacuate basement flats immediately and seek higher ground.

EMERGENCY KIT

- Insurance documents, other important documents
- Batteries (not rechargeable)
- Portable radio (wind-up preferable)
- Mobile phone
- First aid kit with essential prescription medication / repeat prescription form

- Bottled water (check use – by date)
- Non-perishable food items (including energy or cereal bars)
- Blankets, warm clothes
- Wash kit and essential toiletries (including toilet paper and wet wipes)
- Children’s essentials (milk, baby food, sterilized bottles & spoons, nappies, wipes, nappy bags, clothing, comforter, teddy, or favorite toy)
- Camera to record damage for insurance purposes
- Emergency cash
- Additional items for flood kit: wellington boots, waterproof clothing, rubber gloves

STAYING SAFE IN AN EMERGENCY

AT HOME

- Listen to advice given on local radio.
- Avoid electric shocks – keep extension cables out of water and wear rubber boots.
- Avoid enclosed areas which may not be ventilated and where hazardous fumes may build (e.g. garages and cellars).
- Avoid contact with floodwater – it may be contaminated with sewage.
- Do not let children play in flood – water.
- Wash cuts and grazes and cover with a waterproof plaster.
- Avoid walking through floodwater – **15 cm of fast-flowing water can knock you over.** Manhole covers may have come off and there may be other hazards you can’t see.
- Don’t walk along riverbanks or cross river bridges if avoidable – they may collapse in extreme situations.

ON THE ROAD

- Avoid travel but if you must, drive slowly and cautiously. You may know your local roads very well, but a flood can alter the landscape dramatically and turn a quiet road into a potential hazard.
- Don’t drive through water if you can’t tell how deep it is. Around 60 cm of water is all it takes to float many cars.
- Aqua-planning is much more likely in flood conditions.
- Drive considerately: remember your bow-wave could flood nearby homes.
- **Don’t drive down close roads**
- 80% of flood-related deaths occur inside a vehicle. If your car stalls in the water, do not attempt to recover it – leave it and move yourself to safe ground.
- Let someone know your travel plans.

IF YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE

- Emergency services will tell you if you have to evacuate. Follow their instructions carefully.
- Remain calm and leave as quickly as possible.
- Get your family and pets together.
- Check if neighbors need help.
- Make sure fires are out and appliances are turned off.
- Shut all windows and lock doors.
- Emergency accommodation will be provided at a Rest Centre set up for you. You can arrange to stay with family or friends, or your insurance may cover the cost of alternative accommodation.
- If you decide to stay with family or friends let the Police or your council know.
- Do not return home unless you are told by authorities that it is safe to do so.
- Take your emergency kit, including prescription medicines.

AFTER THE FLOODS

IF YOU ARE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE FLOODED, HERE ARE A FEW POINTERS FOR WHEN YOU FIRST GET HOME

FIRST TIPS

Clean taps and run them before use. Have power and gas supplies checked by a professional electrician or gas plumber before turning them back on. Throw away food (including freezer items if power has been off) that may be contaminated and restock your supplies.

Your insurer will arrange for a loss adjuster and other specialists to visit your home to assess the damage. They will project-manage much of the clear up, so speak to them before acting on anything.

THE THREE-STEP CLEAN-UP

If possible, don't fully re-occupy your property until after the following:

1. Remove water and mud

- The fire & Rescue Service can pump out standing water but will charge for non-emergencies. Otherwise use a pump (from hire or DIY shop), or use buckets followed by a wet/dry vacuum.
- Shovel out mud (which may be contaminated) then hose out or use a garden sprayer.

2. Clean and disinfect

- Wear protective clothes, boots and rubber gloves.
- Use a brush, soapy water and heavy-duty cleaner, then rinse.
- Floodwater may be contaminated so disinfect all areas affected after cleaning. Make sure you wash your hands with disinfectant after cleaning up. Disinfecting also avoids mildew and moulds.

3. Dry

- Take furniture, bedding and clothing outside, to avoid mould.
- Use fans plus industrial heaters and dehumidifiers.
- Have the central heating on at 22°C or above.
- Drying out can take weeks or even months. If it's done too quickly, it can cause structural damage and long-term problems.
- Good ventilations is essential – keep windows and doors open on dry days and remove any air brick covers.