

Floods and Flooding

Floods are one of the most common natural disasters. These can be local, affecting just a neighborhood, or impacting a large floodplain that covers multiple states. Some floods can come on very quickly and are referred to as flash floods, and others can take days to develop. Understanding the risks and safety issues regarding floods is paramount to your safety if you should ever be involved in one. PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE if you live in a flood zone. If a flood is likely, tune into your radio or TV or NOAA Weather radio for updates. If a flash flood is a possibility, move to higher ground immediately. Always be aware of drainage channels, canyons, or other areas where flash floods occur – they can happen without advance warning. If you must evacuate, move valuables to the highest points of your home if time allows. Shut off your utilities at the main breaker, and turn off water and gas valves. Disconnect all electrical appliances. **DON'T EVER TOUCH AN ELECTRICAL PLUG, RECEPTICLE, OR DEVICE IF YOU ARE WET OR STANDING IN WATER. DON'T WALK THROUGH MOVING WATER – only 6" of moving water can knock you down.** If you must walk through floodwater, walk where the water is still. Use a long stick (broom, mop or shovel handles work well) to check the ground in front of you before each step. Do not drive through flooded areas, vehicles can and are frequently swept away by just a foot or two of swift moving water. A foot of water will float many vehicles, and just 6" is enough to cause many vehicles to stall or be uncontrollable. After a flood, wait until informed by authorities that the public water supply is safe to drink. Floodwater is toxic – **DON'T EVER DRINK IT!** It may contain chemicals and sewage. Floodwater can also be electrified by downed or underground power lines, avoid it whenever possible! Roads may be weakened by floods - they could collapse from the weight of vehicles - so use caution while driving. Be very careful entering any building that has been flooded, there can be a lot of structural damage that is not easily seen. **EVERYTHING** that got wet must be cleaned and disinfected. Toxic molds can grow and leftover flood mud can be toxic too. **NEVER EVER DRINK FLOODWATER!**

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