

Flood Safety

What You Need to Know

What is flooding?

Flooding is a rising and overflow of water onto land that is normally dry.

What causes flooding?

Fast melting snow, severe storms, and heavy rainfall are common causes of flooding.

What should I do to prepare for a flood?

Floodwaters are contaminated waters. Plan ahead to minimize health and safety risks.

- If your house is in a low-lying or flood-prone area, memorize the safest and fastest route to high ground.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit that includes: first aid kit, canned food and can opener, bottled water, medications, extra clothing, rubber boots and gloves, battery-operated radio, emergency cooking equipment, flashlight, and extra batteries.

How can I keep myself and my family safe outdoors during and after a flood?

- Stay away from puddles, rivers, and streams.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Stay away from stray or wild animals, and do not touch dead animals.
- Never use electrical equipment in wet areas.
- Do not let children go outdoors alone.

How can I be sure I have safe drinking water during and after a flood?

Listen to public announcements about the safety of municipal water supplies. You may be asked to follow recommendations to ensure safe drinking water.

How can I be sure my well water is safe after a flood?

Assume your well is contaminated if floodwater reached your well or covered the top of your well casing. After the floodwater recedes:

- Get the well inspected, tested, and disinfected by a licensed well or pump contractor.
- Do not turn on the pump until the pump's electrical system has been checked by a licensed electrician, well contractor, or pump contractor.
- Make sure the pump's valves and gears are free of silt and sand.

How can I keep my septic system safe after a flood?

- A flooded septic system will not work until the ground water level is below the distribution lines. Avoid toilet flushing and pouring things down the drain until the water level recedes.
- If you suspect your septic system was damaged during a flood, have it professionally inspected.
- Signs of damage include ground settling in the area of the septic system or an inability to accept water.