

What to do before the flood?

Floods are unpredictable and destructive, and they can happen in regions that have never seen rain.

They can cause death and injuries, isolate communities, damage major infrastructure, cut essential services, destroy property and livelihoods.

In Canada, flooding could happen anywhere, at any time and from a variety of water sources including freshet on lakes, rivers and creeks or overflowing catchments and due to heavy rainfall caused by storms.

Apart from the physical damage to property, experiencing a flood can be an extremely emotional time. If you are not prepared for the possibility of a flood, recovery can be slow, stressful and costly.

A few hours spent making your home secure, preparing an emergency kit and flood plan can help you to survive the affects of a flood.

You need to:

- Understand the flood risk to your area
- Prepare your home and property
- Respond when water comes
- Recover after a flood

You can prepare for flooding in several ways:

- Check with your local municipality about local flood plans or records which detail problem areas
- Ask authorities about relocation routes and reception centres
- If your area is flood prone consider alternatives to carpets
- Prepare an emergency kit
- Prepare a household flood plan
- Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers on display
- Check your insurance policy to see if you are covered for flood damage?

If flooding is imminent make your safety a priority and if you have time, try to prepare your property:

- Secure hazardous items
- Roll up rugs, move furniture, electrical items and valuables to a higher level
- Place important personal documents, valuables and vital medical supplies into a waterproof case in an accessible location
- If you are relocating, take your pets with you if it is safe to do so. If not provide adequate food and water and move them to a safer place
- Monitor Environment Canada forecasts and warnings online and listen to your local radio station

Relocating to safer ground:

- If rising waters threaten your home and you decide to move to a safer location, tell your Municipality and/or your neighbours of your plans to move.
- Monitor your local radio for warnings and advice
- Pack warm clothing, essential medication, valuables and personal papers in waterproof bags along with your emergency kit.
- Raise furniture, clothing and valuables onto beds, tables and into roof space place electrical items in the highest place
- Empty freezers and refrigerators, leaving doors open to avoid damage or loss if they float.
- Turn off power, water and gas and take your mobile phone
- Whether you leave or stay, put sand bags in the toilet bowl and over all laundry/bathroom drain holes to prevent sewage backflow
- Lock your home and take recommended relocation routes for your area
- Do not drive into water of unknown depth and current

If it's too late to leave:

- Let your municipal office know you plan to stay and shelter in place
- Monitor your local radio for warnings and advice
- Get to higher ground
- Switch off electricity and gas supplies to your home
- Prepare to move vehicles, outdoor equipment, garbage, chemical and poisons to higher locations
- Prepare for the well being of pets
- Raise furniture above likely flood levels
- Check your emergency kit
- Do not allow children to play in or near floodwaters
- Avoid entering floodwaters, if you must do so, wear solid shoes and check depth and current with a stick
- Stay away from drains, culverts and water over knee deep.
- Do not use gas or electrical appliances that have been in floodwater until checked for safety
- Do not eat food that has been in floodwaters
- Boil tap water until supplies have been declared safe or drink bottled water