

After a flood

The following are guidelines for the period following a flood:

- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- If water is not safe, or you have a well, and it has not been tested following the flood, use bottled water if available. You can also boil water for one minute, let it cool, filter it through clean cloth and store in clean containers.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. It may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded as roads may be weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Use caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, especially in foundations.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewer systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.
- Spoiled food and flooded medicines and cosmetics are also health hazards. When in doubt, throw them out.

Know these terms to stay safe!

Flood Watch: Flooding is possible. Tune in to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.

Flash Flood Watch: Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.

Flood Warning: Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Do not count on being rescued!

Flash Flood Warning: A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground on foot immediately.

For more information on flood preparedness, emergency supply kit, response and food and water safety:
www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/
www.sarpycasshealthdepartment.org

Learning activity for children:
www.fema.gov/kids/floods.html

Learning about and preparing for a disaster is not done out of fear, but out of commitment:

- **To yourself**
- **To your family**
- **To your neighbors**
- **To your community**

FLOODS!



What you need to know and do to protect yourself, family and property during a flood.



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What causes a flood?

- Heavy, intense rainfall
- Run-off from a deep snow cover
- Over-saturated soil, when the ground can't hold any more water
- High river, stream or reservoir levels caused by unusually large amounts of rain
- Ice jams in rivers
- Urbanization, or lots of buildings and parking lots
- Dam/levee failure



Minor flooding – minimal or no property damage, but possibly a public threat

Moderate flooding – Some inundation of structures or roads near streams. Some evacuations to higher levels may be necessary.

Major flooding – Extensive inundation of structures and roads. Significant evacuation of people and animals to higher elevations.

Flash Flood – Occurs within six hours of a rain event or following a dam or levee failure. They can be unexpected and deadly.

How to protect your home from flood damage:

- Avoid building in a flood prone area unless you are able to elevate and reinforce your home.
- Have contractors elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Install “check valves” in sewer traps to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Contact community officials to find out if they are planning to construct barriers (levees, beams, floodwalls) to stop floodwater from entering homes in your area.
- Seal the walls in your basement with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.

Be safe during a flood

If flooding is likely in your area:

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any danger of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly.
- Do not allow children near high water, storm drains or ditches. Hidden dangers often lie beneath the water.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams or washes when there is threat of flood or flash flood.
- Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

- Do not walk through flowing water. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet and sweep you away.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.
- Turn off your electricity to prevent electrical shock.
- Watch for small wild animals or rodents that may seek shelter in your home. Use a pole or stick to frighten them away.
- If water is not moving you can walk through it but walk slowly watching for dangerous or slippery debris like broken glass or nails. Wear thick soled shoes.

If you must evacuate

- Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off all utilities if instructed to do so.
- Disconnect electrical appliance if you are not wet or standing in water.
- Secure your home.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. You and your vehicle can be quickly swept away.



Turn around, don't drown!
6" of water can cause loss of control and stalling. 12" of water will float many vehicles 2ft. of moving water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pick-up trucks.