



5 Steps to Ready

Flooding

Flooding is very common and can affect many communities. Protect yourself and your family with these easy steps.

1. Make a plan

- Find out if you live in an area that floods easily. Check local flood maps or [FEMA online tools](#).
- Know the difference between a flood watch (flooding is possible) and a flood warning (flooding is occurring or will happen soon).
- Contact people in your family, friends and neighbors who may need help during a flood. Let them know if flooding is expected. This includes older adults, people with disabilities and those with limited mobility.
- Plan how you will leave if flooding happens. Choose more than one route. Roads can flood fast.
- Choose more than one place to meet your family if you get separated.
- Plan how you can help your family and neighbors who cannot leave on their own. Floods can happen with little warning.
- If you use medical equipment that needs electricity, plan for power outages. Use generators safely. Keep batteries dry to prevent fires.

2. Prepare your essentials

- Build an emergency kit and keep it in a bag that you can grab quickly.
 - Store enough food and water for at least three days.
 - Include food and water for pets and those with special diets.
 - Include a first aid kit, work gloves, flashlight, soap or hand sanitizer and waterproof bags for protecting important items.
 - Make copies of important documents, such as health insurance, ID (passport, birth certificate and social security card), financial information (insurance policies, bank account records and a copy of your property deed). Store these in a waterproof container. Keep a copy of these documents on your phone, in the cloud or on a USB memory stick.
 - Add a battery-powered or hand-crank radio to receive emergency information during power outages.
- Consider your medications:
 - Ask your pharmacist about extra medicine if needed. Keep medications in a waterproof container as part of your emergency kit.
 - If your medicine needs to stay cold, ask what to do if the power goes out.

3. Protect your home

This is very important if you live in an area that easily floods. While many of these upgrades are expensive, they can save you significantly if your home floods.

- Keep flood insurance. Regular homeowners and renters insurance does not cover flood damage.
- Make a video of your belongings for insurance.
- Raise electrical systems, water heaters and appliances above potential flood levels if possible. Flood water can damage these systems and may require replacement.
- Install check valves in plumbing to stop water from backing up into drains.
- Clear gutters, drains and downspouts regularly so water flows away from your house.

4. Stay safe after a flood

- Stay away from flood water. Do not walk, swim or drive through flood water. Flood water is unsafe. It can have germs, chemicals, harmful bacteria and it may hide sharp objects that can cause injury.
- After flooding, watch for health risks like mold and dirty water.
- Watch out for sharp objects and fallen power lines.
- Check your home for structural damage before going back inside.
- Take photos of the damage. You may need them for insurance and disaster assistance.
- When cleaning up, use safety gear like gloves, N95 masks and boots.
- Follow local guidance on water safety, clean-up and when it is safe to return home.



Do not return home until authorities say it is safe.

5. Stay informed

- Sign up for local emergency alerts on your phone. An early warning can give you the time you need to prepare for rising waters.
- If there is flooding nearby or heavy rain is expected, frequently check water levels and evacuation orders and be prepared to leave quickly. If possible, leave the high-risk area before evacuation orders to reduce traffic.
- Download the FEMA app for emergency alerts and the NOAA Weather Radio app.

Learn more at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) and [americares.org/ClimateClinics](https://www.americares.org/ClimateClinics)