

How to Survive a Flood

Floods can strike quickly in many parts of the world. Surviving a flood is a combination of preparation and taking appropriate action as soon as the natural disaster begins.

Steps

Be aware of your area's flood risk

Check to see if you have insurance that covers flooding. If not, find out how to get flood insurance.

Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit. The kit should contain:

- First aid kit and essential medications.
- Canned food and can opener
- At least three gallons of water per person
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Identification, such as a passport, drivers license, etc.
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members, such as diapers, toys, etc.
- Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)

Identify where you could go if told to evacuate. Choose several places, such as a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter. Make sure everyone in the family knows where each place is located and how to get there.

- Call your local Red Cross chapter, emergency management office, or planning and zoning department.
- If it has been raining hard for several hours, or steadily raining for several days, listen to local radio or TV stations for flood information.

Reduce potential flood damage.

- Raise your furnace, water heater and electric panel to a higher level if they are in areas of your home that could flood.
- Move valuables to higher points in your home.

Pay attention to flood warning updates. Floods may take several hours to develop, or can occur in a matter of minutes.

- A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area.
- A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

When a flood WATCH is issued, move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home. Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation notice is issued, and be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.

When a flood WARNING is issued, listen to local radio and TV stations for information and advice. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible. Always listen to the instructions authorities give.

During a Flood

Evacuate immediately. You may have only a short time to escape. Act quickly, utilizing your planning route.

Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains. Do not drive around barricades. They are there for your safety.

If evacuating in your car, drive through as little water as possible and take the shortest route to your meeting place. Make sure you have your emergency kit with you.

Never walk through moving water. The currents in even 6 inches (15 cm) of water can be dangerous. In still water, use a stick or another long object to test the area and make sure it is safe.

If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.