

What to Do Before a Flood

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Use NOAA Weather Radio or listen continuously to a local radio or television station.
- Be ready to evacuate immediately.
- Follow authorities' instructions.
- Save lives, not belongings.

If a flood or flash flood watch is issued for your area, you should:

- Use a NOAA Weather Radio or listen continuously to a local station on a portable, battery-powered radio or television.
- Be ready to act quickly. Floods and flash floods can happen quickly and without warning. Be ready to act immediately.
- Be alert to signs of flooding, and, if you live in a flood-prone area, be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. Floods can happen quickly and you may need to leave with little or no notice.
- Follow the instructions and advice of local authorities. Local authorities are the most informed about affected areas and the most knowledgeable about areas you should avoid.
- If your home is in a flood-prone area:
 - Fill plastic bottles with clean water for drinking. (See Appendix: Storing Water.) Water may become contaminated or water service may be interrupted.
 - Fill bathtubs and sinks with water for flushing the toilet or washing the floor or clothing. Adults can use this water for bathing, but young children should not bathe in water that has been stored in glazed tubs and sinks because over time lead can leach into the water from the glaze.
 - Bring outdoor belongings, such as patio furniture, indoors. Unsecured items may be swept away and damaged by floodwater.
 - Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home. If floodwater affects your home, higher floors are less likely to be damaged.
 - Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities. Authorities may ask you to turn off water or electric utilities to prevent damage to your home or within the community. Most of the time they will tell you to leave the gas on because, if you shut it off, a professional is required to turn your gas back on, and it may be several weeks before you receive service.
 - Turn off propane tanks. Propane tanks may be damaged or dislodged by strong winds or water. Turning them off reduces the fire potential.
 - Unplug small appliances. Small appliances may be affected by electrical power surges that may occur. Unplugging them reduces potential damage.
 - Keep your previously assembled Disaster Supplies Kit near. You may need to act quickly. Having your supplies ready will save time.
 - Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation notice is issued. If electric power is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.
 - Be prepared to evacuate. Local officials may ask you to leave if they conclude that your home is at risk from floodwater.