

# Flooding

*Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States. Floods can develop over the course of a few weeks or happen quickly.*

## Terms to Know:

- ◆ Flood Watch: Conditions for local flooding are favorable.
- ◆ Flood Warning: A flood is occurring or is likely to occur soon.
- ◆ Flash Flood Watch: Conditions may develop that lead to flash flooding.
- ◆ Flash Flood Warning: Flash flooding is imminent or occurring.

## Before a Flood:

- ◆ Contact your insurance provider to purchase flood insurance.
- ◆ Become aware of any flood plains in the area.
- ◆ If in a flood plain, put hot water heaters, electrical panels and furnaces away from the ground.
- ◆ In case of an evacuation, make sure that preparedness kits are portable.
- ◆ Have basements waterproofed.
- ◆ If flooding is possible, try and create a barrier between the house and the water or it's likely path.

## During a Flood:

- ◆ Evacuate the home if flooding is possible. Know the area and make sure to know alternate escape routes in case one is blocked.
- ◆ Get to higher ground if possible.
- ◆ If evacuating, take all pets. However, many shelters may NOT allow pets inside due to sanitary conditions, so plan accordingly.
- ◆ Do NOT try to drive through water. As little as 2 feet can cause most cars to float, and as little as a few inches of moving water can wash most cars away with the current.
- ◆ Do NOT try to cross moving water on foot. As little as a few inches can knock an adult off their feet.
- ◆ Watch TV or listen to the radio to find out what actions to take next.
- ◆ Take pets, however, shelters may NOT allow pets inside due to sanitary conditions, so plan accordingly.



### After a Flood:

- ◆ If injured, seek necessary medical care at the nearest hospital or clinic.
- ◆ Avoid disaster areas.
- ◆ Stay out of any building if floodwaters remain around the building.
- ◆ Avoid entering ANY building (home, business, or other) before local officials have said it is safe to do so.
- ◆ Report broken utility lines to the appropriate authorities.
- ◆ When entering buildings, use extreme caution.
- ◆ Wear sturdy shoes.
- ◆ Use battery powered lanterns or flashlights when examining buildings.
- ◆ Look for fire hazards.
- ◆ Watch out for animals, especially poisonous snakes that may have come into buildings with the floodwaters.
- ◆ Watch for loose plaster, drywall and ceilings that could fall.
- ◆ Take pictures of the damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.



### After Returning Home:

- ◆ Throw away food that has come into contact with flood waters. Some canned foods may be salvageable.
- ◆ Pump out flooded basements gradually (about one-third of the water per day) to avoid structural damage.
- ◆ Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits and leaching systems as soon as possible.
- ◆ Follow FEMA or Red Cross guidelines about cleaning flood damaged homes.

Note: Contact your local health department before making repairs to septic systems.