

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



## STAYING SAFE FROM FLOODING

*Flooding can occur at any time of the year, but it is most common during the spring and summer. It can have a significant impact on homes, resources, and the environment, posing a serious risk to our communities. To stay safe, it is essential to follow the guidance of local authorities, monitor flood warnings, and be prepared to evacuate if necessary.*

### What causes floods?

Floods are a common hazard in Canada. Any of the following events can cause a flood:

- ∞ Heavy rainfall
- ∞ Ice jams
- ∞ Rapid melting of glaciers or snowpacks
- ∞ Natural or man-made dam failures

### What should I do to prepare for floods?

Taking these steps can help you prepare for a flood, no matter where you live.

- ∞ Check if flooding is a known risk for your community. Communities that are based in ravines or along rivers, floodplains, or other low areas are most vulnerable to flood damage.
- ∞ Stay updated on floods by downloading the Government of Alberta's [Alberta Rivers: Data and Advisories](#) app or visiting their [Alberta River Basins](#) map.
- ∞ Build and maintain a [household emergency kit](#), a [vehicle emergency kit](#), and a [pet emergency kit](#).
- ∞ Store essential documents in a secure location that is accessible and above ground.

If you have any questions,  
please contact  
[wildfires@metis.org](mailto:wildfires@metis.org)



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- ∞ Use weather protection sealant around basement windows and the base of ground-level doors.
- ∞ Ensure downspout drainage moves water away from the property.
- ∞ Install a sump pump and zero reverse flow valves in basement floor drains if possible.
- ∞ Build and maintain a plan for livestock in case of an evacuation.

**Please note:** Find out what your water damage policy is on your home insurance plan. To learn what typically is and isn't covered, please refer to AMA's [Home Insurance Coverage for Water Damage](#).

## What should I do during a flood?

Upon receiving a flood alert, it's crucial to stay informed by monitoring local news and updates from officials regarding the situation. Next, contact your electricity or fuel supplier for specific guidance on protecting your electrical, natural gas, or propane appliances. It's essential to avoid attempting to shut off electricity if any water is present, as your safety is the top priority. If time permits, move furniture, electrical appliances, and other belongings to higher floors to prevent water damage.

Additionally, toxic substances, such as pesticides and insecticides, should be relocated away from areas likely to flood to prevent contamination of nearby water sources. Disconnect eavestroughs attached to your house's sewer system to avoid overflow issues. Use sandbags or other barrier supplies to safeguard your property, following any specific instructions from local authorities. By taking these steps, you can help ensure your household's safety during a flood alert.

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## Evacuation tips:

- ∞ Avoid low-elevation areas, such as ravines or underpasses, as these are prone to flooding quickly.
- ∞ Prioritize safety by abandoning your stalled vehicle if it gets caught in fast-rising waters.

**Please note:** Do not move through a flooded area. A small amount of flowing water—just 6 inches—can knock an adult over, and 12 inches can wash away a vehicle. Two feet of swiftly moving water can easily shift mid-sized cars (Government of Alberta).

## What do I need to do when returning after a flood?

A flood can cause considerable damage to your community. You should only return to your property once authorities have determined that it's safe to return. Be aware of the potential hazards you might encounter when you re-enter.

**Do not** enter your home if any of the following issues apply:

- ∞ The house shows signs of structural collapse.
- ∞ The house's structure is no longer on its foundation.
- ∞ The main power switch was not turned off before flooding.

While you're cleaning up, make sure to prioritize hygiene and your safety. You can protect yourself and your loved ones by ensuring everyone follows these tips:

- ∞ Limit contact with floodwater and contaminated items.
- ∞ Wear protective clothing (rubber boots, gloves, safety glasses, and hard hats).
- ∞ Avoid contaminated water and wash your hands frequently with clean water.
- ∞ Keep children and pets away from contaminated water.



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Small steps will help you gradually address the property damage caused by the flood/ These include the following measures:

- ∞ Brush off dried mud to simplify cleanup.
- ∞ Dry all carpets within two days, and replace them if they're severely damaged.
- ∞ Clean the walls and floors with water and unscented detergent.
- ∞ Move damp items to a cool, dry area, and use fans to reduce mould growth.

**Please note:** For more information on cleaning your home safely after a flood, visit the Government of Alberta's [Cleaning Your Home After a Flood](#) webpage. **Call 911** if you're in a life-threatening emergency.

Emergencies that require evacuation can affect your physical, mental, and emotional health. To help you take care of yourself and your family during and after an evacuation, we've compiled a list of financial, housing, and mental health resources under the Accessing Assistance section at [albertametis.com/emergency-preparedness](http://albertametis.com/emergency-preparedness)

For more information about post-evacuation supports, reach out to [wildfires@metis.org](mailto:wildfires@metis.org)

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