

FLOOD AND WATER DAMAGE SAFETY



WHAT TO DO BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A FLOOD

DID YOU KNOW?

Floods are the most common natural hazard in Canada. They are mostly caused by heavy rainfall and/or quickly-melting snow and ice.

Springtime is typically the season with the most potential for flooding – the build-up of winter precipitation and heavy rainfall together can create an overabundance of water.

HIGH RISK AREAS

Areas that are especially at risk of flooding can include:

- Low-lying grounds, which are especially at risk as water tends to flood low points.
- Too much water draining into city sewers too quickly can cause a back up of the system, eliminating a drainage option and causing water levels to rise.



PREVENTION

If you know you live in an area that is prone to flooding or you are worried that your home may be at risk, it is best to protect your home through preventative action.



Install or have the following on hand:

- A generator or backup sump pump if you're in an urban area, in case the power goes out.
- A downspout drainage away from your home to ensure the water flows away from your home instead of toward it.
- Zero reverse flow valves in basement floor drains.

Make sure your home has:

- Clean gutters so water can flow freely.
- Shrubs, plants or other greenery over your asphalt and concrete lots, if you have any. These materials can help absorb storm water.

You should also ensure that proper seals are in place around your basement windows and ground level doors. In the event of a flood, these will help mitigate any potential leakage into your home.



Clear your roof when a significant amount of snow or ice builds up. The sun beaming down could cause a sudden influx of unexpected water.

Lastly, make sure you are covered for flood insurance.

MITIGATION

When a flood is occurring, it is important to minimize the damage as quickly as possible.

- Move small electrical appliances and valuable belongings above floor level, out of the reach of water.
- Close all basement windows.
- Make sure a new battery is installed into your sump pump backup, if necessary. A “deep cycle” battery will require less maintenance than a “wet cell” battery.



- Roll up rugs if possible, storing them upstairs and away from any flooding or flooded areas.

If a flood does occur, protect yourself by doing the following:

- If advised by local authorities, vacate your home. Don't stay behind and put potential rescuers and your own safety at risk. Stick to the path recommended, as shortcuts may be blocked or dangerous.
- Avoid wading or driving in flood conditions. Floodwater can move quickly and erode roads.
- Stay clear of standing water and downed power lines until the danger has passed.



REHABILITATION

After evacuation but before entering your home, make sure it is safe. Look for structural damage, buckled walls, and dangerous debris. If the main power switch was not turned off prior to evacuating, have an electrician come to inspect it and wait for the all-clear.

When your home has experienced flood damage make sure to immedi-

ately contact your insurer and submit a claim. Check for mold during your cleaning. Your insurer may require that you hire a restoration contractor to assess the damages. Take photos and videos of what was impacted for insurance purposes.



Once your home is declared safe, you can start the cleanup process.

- Save papers of value by placing them in a plastic bag and storing them in the freezer. The dehydration process will gradually pull excess water out.



- Minimize contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated.
- Remove water gradually, not all at once. Getting rid of it too quickly may cause walls or floors to buckle. Strategize water removal by using pumps or pails first, and then switch to a wet/dry vacuum until all water is removed.

- Dispose of all items that may have absorbed flood water. These include but are not limited to insulation, particleboard, paper-based materials, mattresses, stuffed animals and other toys, pillows, cushions and rugs.
- Clean, disinfect and rinse anything you are saving. Dry furniture away from direct heat or sunlight, the direct heat/sunlight can contort and crack furniture if done too quickly.





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