

How to Prepare for a Flood

Determine if you are in a flood prone area

To find out if your property is located in a floodplain check with the Lane County Land Management Division to submit an application for a Floodplain Verification (Office) Permit. The Planning Program is located at 125 East 8th Ave, Eugene, OR. Planning staff are available Monday – Friday from 9:00am – 12:30pm or, you may call the Planner on Duty at 682-3577. If requested, planning staff can conduct a site visit on your property by submitting a Floodplain Verification (Field) Permit, to review potential flood problems and explain ways to stop flooding or prevent flood damage to your property.

- You may also view and print [Digital Flood Maps](#) (A high speed internet connection is required).
- Paper Flood Rate Insurance Maps can also be ordered though Federal Emergency Management Agency's online [Map Resource Center](#).
- Keep in mind that some areas susceptible to flooding may not be shown on flood maps. It's a good idea to talk with neighbors who have lived in your neighborhood for a long time to share information on preparedness and past experiences.
- Remember, the next flood can always be bigger than floods that have occurred in the past.

Consider buying flood insurance to protect your property

Homeowners' insurance does not cover flood loss, but most homeowners' insurance agents also sell flood insurance. Because Lane County is a participating member of the National Flood Insurance Program, all residents can get flood insurance, even if you are located in an area not mapped as a floodplain, or even if you have never been flooded before. Learn More at [FloodSmart.gov](#). Remember, over 25% of all flood insurance claims are filed for damages outside of mapped 100-year floodplain. Purchasing flood insurance even if you live outside of a mapped floodplain can be a wise investment.

Know what the different weather terms mean

- **Flood Potential Outlook** means heavy precipitation and/or snow melt could produce flooding
- **Flood Watch** means conditions are favorable for flooding but the occurrence is not certain
- **Flood Warning** means longer, more gradual flooding usually beginning after 6 hours of excessive rainfall or during spring snow runoff.
- Learn more from the [National Weather Service](#).

Update flood procedures for your family, farm or business (every year)

- Make sure everyone knows the emergency phone numbers, and when to call them.
- Learn the safest route from your home or business to high ground.
- Make arrangements for housing in the event you need to evacuate your home.
- Establish meeting places and phone numbers in case family members are separated by rising flood waters.
- Teach all family members how and when to turn off gas, electricity and water lines.

Buy sand and sandbags ahead of time

- Water and debris control aids (such as sandbags, sand, lumber and plywood) are inexpensive when compared to the protection received, and can be installed with normal household tools. Materials are readily available at your local home improvement store, lumber yard and/or sand & gravel yard. Sandbags are also available for purchase online. To find vendors, just type “sandbags” in your search tool. Sandbags, when properly placed, will redirect storm and debris flows away from built structures.
- Understand how to use sandbags with these resources from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: [Flood Fighting - How to use Sandbags & Sandbagging Techniques](#).

Minimize flood damage

- [Learn how to flood-proof your home](#) with this guide from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Store valuables at higher elevations (second story, if possible).
- Store household chemicals above flood levels.
- Ensure that underground storage tanks are fully sealed and secure.
- Close storm shutters and sandbag doorways.
- Have check valves installed in building sewer traps to prevent flood waters from backing up in sewer drains.
- Move vehicles and RVs to higher ground.

Keep emergency supplies on hand

- Prepare a [Disaster Supply Kit](#).
- Keep a portable radio, emergency cooking equipment, flashlights, fresh batteries, non-perishable food and drinking water, essential medicines and a first-aid kit.

- Consider purchasing a [NOAA Weather Radio](#).

Protect Your Pets

- [Develop a Plan](#) for taking care of your pets with help from FEMA.

Stop Erosion Run-Off

- Keep street drains, storm grates and flap gates free of leaves, sediment, soil and other debris.
- Cover exposed soil and stockpiles with materials such as tarps, mulch and hydro-seeding to protect soil surfaces from heavy rains.
- Plant native vegetation along the banks of rivers or streams on your property to help hold the bank in place and prevent erosion.

During a Flood

Keep a battery-powered radio tuned to a local station

- Follow all emergency instructions.

If you are caught in a building by rapidly rising waters, call 911 for help

- Then move to a higher floor or to the roof. Take warm, weatherproof clothing, a flashlight, a cellular phone and a portable radio.

Do not walk or wade in flooded areas

- Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires:

- Behind drowning, electrocution is the number two cause of death during floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your local utility company or to the County Emergency Management Office.

Be prepared to evacuate

- Be prepared to move to a safe place. Know your evacuation routes and have a higher ground location in mind in case flooded roads cut off your escape route.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Evacuation is much simpler and safer before flood waters become too deep for ordinary vehicles to drive through.

If you evacuate by car

- Do not drive where water is over the road or past barricaded road signs. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else.

- If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it as soon as possible and walk to safety in the direction you came from.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes, as shortcuts may be blocked.

When flooding is imminent, but only if time permits

- Close the main gas valve.
- Turn off all utilities in your building at the main power switch. Do not touch any electrical equipment unless it is in a dry area or you are standing on a piece of dry wood while wearing rubber-soled shoes and rubber gloves.
- Record flood statistics such as time, gage reading, and local flood elevations for use in future home flood forecasting.

After a Flood

Before re-entering your home

- Check for structural damage that could cause the building to collapse. Be cautious of potential gas leaks, electrical shorts and live wires.

Look before you step

- After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

When re-entering a building

- Use flashlights, rather than lanterns or candles (in case of gas leaks).

Have a professional check:

- Your heating system, electrical panel, outlets and appliances for safety before using. Call the gas company to have them turn the gas back on.

Document your losses

- Photograph damages and record repair costs.

Contact your insurance agent for flood loss claims

Remove and empty sandbags

- Do not empty used sand bags into the river or on its banks. Store sand for future use.

Apply for financial assistance

- Only available following a federal disaster declaration. Listen to the radio or television for updates on disaster assistance and registration procedures.