

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters, except fire. Floods can be slow or fast rising, but generally develop over a period of days. Flash floods usually result from intense storms dropping large amounts of rain within a brief period. They occur with little or no warning and can reach full peak in only a few minutes. Dam failures are potentially the worst flood events. When a dam fails, an enormous quantity of water suddenly rushes downstream, destroying anything in its path. Neighborhoods located in low-lying areas are especially at risk for flooding. Those near bodies of water or downstream from a dam are vulnerable, too.

Here is some information to help you develop a plan and be ready to act before the possibility of a flood or flash flood threatens you or your family:

Know What to Expect

- Know your area's flood risk – if unsure, call your local emergency management agency office, planning and zoning department, or please visit www.floodsmart.gov.
- If it has rained hard for several hours or rained steadily for several days, prepare for the possibility of flooding.
- Closely monitor a local radio station, television, or NOAA Weather Radio for flood information.



Reduce Potential Flood Damage By

- Avoid building or buying a home in a floodplain.
- Raising your furnace, water heater, and electric panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- Consulting a professional for further information about damage reduction measures that you can implement.

Floods Can Take Several Hours or Days to Develop

- A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area.
- A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.

Flash Floods Can Take Only a Few Minutes or a Few Hours to Develop

- A flash flood WATCH means flash flooding is possible in your area.
- A flash flood WARNING means a flash flood is occurring or will occur very soon.

Prepare a Family Disaster Plan

- Check to see if you have insurance that covers flooding. If not, get flood insurance immediately.
 - Visit <http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program> for more details.
- Keep insurance policies, documents, and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.
- Identify where you could go if told to evacuate. Choose several places – a friend's home in another town, a hotel, or a shelter.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing

- First aid kit and essential medications
- Canned food and can opener
- At least three gallons of water per person
- Protective clothing, rainwear, and bedding or sleeping bags
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members
- Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on.)



When a Flood WATCH is issued

- Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home.
- Fill your car's gas tank in case an evacuation notice is issued.

When a Flood WARNING is issued

- Closely monitor NOAA Weather Radio, local radio, or television for the latest weather forecasts.
- If told to evacuate, do so immediately!

When a Flash Flood WATCH is issued

- Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.

When a Flash Flood WARNING is issued

- Or if you think flooding has begun, evacuate immediately. You may have only seconds to escape. Act quickly!
- Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks, and storm drains. Do not drive through or around barricades; they are there for your safety.
- If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

To help families prepare, Ready Georgia, a statewide emergency preparedness campaign established by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security (GEMA) offers the tools needed to make an emergency supply kit, develop a communications plan, and stay informed about potential threats. For more information, visit www.ready.ga.gov.