

FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN



HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

In addition to the resources offered by the Harris County Flood Control District, the American Red Cross and FEMA both have excellent disaster preparedness documents available on their websites, www.redcross.org and www.fema.gov. Their documents cover more than just floods and are useful for preparing for other potential disasters. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

Before a Flood

Find out what could happen to you and your family. Where will your family be when it floods? They could be anywhere – at work, at school, or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children or parents are safe?

Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare, and other places where your family spends time.

Create a Family Preparedness Plan

Discuss with your family why you need to prepare for a flood and the dangers associated with a flood. Plan to share responsibility and work together as a team. Pick a place to meet outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.

Ask an out-of-town or out-of-state friend or family member to be your "family check-in contact." If you have trouble contacting each other during or after a flood, call this person and tell them where you are.

If infants, elderly, or handicapped individuals are present, know what their special needs are if you stay in your residence, if you need to evacuate in a hurry, or go to a shelter after the flood.

Get to know your neighbors and discuss how you can help each other.

Plan how to take care of your pets. Most emergency shelters do not allow pets.

Implement Your Plan

Post emergency, family and neighbor telephone numbers by the phones.

Make sure all family members have the family check-in contact person's phone number, and the location and phone number of the family meeting place outside your neighborhood.

Show each responsible family member how to turn off the electricity to your residence at the main breaker or switch.

Keep flood insurance coverage current.

Prepare and maintain a family emergency kit. Replace items, as necessary.

Prepare and maintain an emergency kit for your car.

Practice and maintain your plan with all family members.

Pay attention to all National Weather Service flood watches and warnings.

FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT

WATER

- One gallon per person per day (two quarts drinking/two quarts food preparation and sanitation).
- Keep or be prepared to store a three-day supply per person at home.

FOOD

- Compact non-perishable food that requires little preparation.
- Manual can opener
- Sterno or camping stove, if you must heat food.

FIRST AID KIT

- Use the items recommended by the Red Cross
- Prepare one for both your home and car

TOOLS and SUPPLIES

- Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Utility knife
- Compass
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- Paper, pencil
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Personal hygiene items
- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation)
- Needles, thread
- Duct tape
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Plastic storage bags
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Plastic sheeting
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type

CLOTHING and BEDDING

- Rain gear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Clothing appropriate for conditions

SPECIAL ITEMS

- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Prescription drugs
- Books and games
- Important family documents in waterproof, portable container
 - Birth, marriage, death certificates
 - Will, insurance policies, deeds, contracts, etc.
 - Passports, social security cards, immunization records
 - Bank and credit card account numbers and contacts
- Inventory of valuable household goods
- Important telephone numbers
- Special items for infants, elderly, or handicapped, if applicable.



FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN

REMEMBER

When you are faced with a flooding situation:
STAY PUT wherever you are, unless your life is threatened.

When Flooding is Imminent

1. Put your family preparedness plan into action.
2. Contact your family members and confirm plan of action and alternatives.
3. Confirm your family emergency kit is complete and ready.
4. Move emergency supply items and valuables to highest inside part of your residence.
5. Locate and put pets in a safe place.
6. Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cutoff.
7. If you can do so safely, turn off the electricity at the breaker before water enters your residence.
8. If you have time, and can do so safely, move vehicles to higher ground.
9. Your safest option is to stay put. However, if you must evacuate to a safe location or a shelter, take your emergency supply kit and tell your family check-in contact you're leaving. **Don't drive through flooded streets.**

During a Flood

If you did not get the electricity turned off before the water entered your residence, do not turn it off. Get out of the water.

Move valuables and emergency supplies to highest inside part of your residence. If necessary, use the attic or roof. Wait for help.

Don't try to swim or wade to safety. Wait for the water to recede or rescue. There are environmental and biological dangers in the water such as oil, gasoline, sewage, fire ants, etc. Downed power lines can electrify floodwaters. Don't let your kids play in the water.

Stay calm and wait. Don't try to walk or drive through floodwaters. Most deaths occur from people walking or driving through floodwaters. If your car stalls in rising waters, get out immediately and get to higher ground.

After a Flood

Although floodwaters may be down in some areas, many dangers still exist. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, wait or go another way.

Keep listening to the radio for news about what to do, where to go, or places to avoid.

If you must walk or drive in areas that have flooded, stay on firm ground. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines. Avoid flood debris.

If you evacuated your home, check for the following when you return:
Use flashlights to check your home - do not light matches or turn on electrical switches.

Electricity:

- If the water has risen above the electrical outlets in the home, contact a licensed electrician before turning on the main circuit breaker or trying to restore power.
- Allow all electrical appliances and electronic equipment that were submerged in water to dry thoroughly for at least one week. Have them checked by a qualified repairperson before turning them on. Attempting to repair a flood-damaged appliance could result in electrical shock or death.
- If the outside unit of an air conditioning system has been under water, mud and water may have accumulated in the controls. Attempting to restart it could result in further damage and costly repairs. Have the unit checked by a qualified air conditioning technician.

Gas:

- If you smell gas when you return to your home, leave the house and call CenterPoint Energy at 713-659-2111 from a neighbor's house or a remote location as soon as possible.
- If your home was flooded, call a licensed plumber or a gas appliance technician to inspect your appliances and gas piping to make sure it is in good operating condition before calling CenterPoint Energy to reconnect service. This includes outdoor gas appliances, such as pool heaters, gas grills, and gas lights.
- If you've had no flooding in your home and your natural gas is turned off at the meter, please call CenterPoint Energy to reconnect service.

Check for fire hazards and other household hazards.

Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches and flammable liquids immediately.

Contact your insurance agent to discuss claims.

Listen to your local radio stations to find out where to go for assistance. The Red Cross can help by providing vouchers to purchase items to meet emergency needs and can also provide a clean-up kit: mop, broom, etc. You can obtain a copy of the book "Repairing Your Flooded Home" available free from the Red Cross. Other organizations also provide additional assistance.

If you hire cleanup or repair contractors, be sure they are qualified to do the job. Check references. Get written estimates. Keep all receipts. Be wary of people who drive through neighborhoods offering home repair.

A flood can cause emotional and physical stress. Look after yourself and your family as you focus on cleanup and repair.

