

Newsletter: Floods - What You Need to Know

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What causes a flood?

According to the American Red Cross, flooding is caused by heavy or steady rains that last several hours or days, saturating the ground. A disaster can occur in conditions as simple as these!

How do I prepare?

Preparedness is crucial to better withstand the devastation of flooding. Prepare a flood safety kit to ensure your safety and survival. Your kit should include:

- Three day supply of water (one gallon per person, per day)
- Three day supply of non-perishable food
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Battery powered or hand crank radio
- First aid kit
- Extra medications
- Personal hygiene items (you can pick up personal hygiene kits at Walmart with travel sized containers of necessary items)
- Copies of personal documents, such as birth certificates, death certificates, insurance policies, social security cards, identification cards, etc. (consider a waterproof pouch to store these papers)
- Extra chargers for cell phones
- Cash
- Blankets
- Baby supplies (if necessary)
- Pet supplies (if necessary)
- Extra clothing
- Rain gear, such as ponchos and rain boots
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Disposable camera to take photos of property damage

Sources:

[American Red Cross](#)
[National Geographic](#)



Newsletter Spotlight

- What cause a flood?
- Flood preparedness
- Flood response
- Flood recovery
- Staying in contact with loved ones
- Did you know? Wyoming Quick Facts

PREPARE YOUR HOME:

- **Construct barriers around your home, such as levees, beams, and floodwalls, to prevent floodwater from entering**
- **Use waterproofing compounds to seal basement walls**
- **Avoid constructing your home in a floodplain**

WATCH VERSUS WARNING. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

A flood *watch* means that flooding could occur. A flood *warning* means that flooding is occurring or will very soon.

How do I respond?

You have your flood safety kit prepared, but what do you do when a flood begins? Remember to stay flood aware and, in the event of flooding, seek higher ground *immediately!*

Be flood aware:

- Keep an eye on television stations and/or an ear on radio stations and a NOAA weather radio for flood warnings
- In the event of heavy or prolonged rains, prepare yourself to evacuate at any time

If a flood or flash flood warning is issued:

- Head for higher ground right away
- Avoid floodwaters! If you encounter an area where water is above your ankles, go another way. According to the American Red Cross, it only takes six inches of swiftly moving water to sweep you off your feet
- If you are driving and encounter a flooded road, go another way. If waters are rising rapidly around your vehicle, evacuate the vehicle and get to higher ground. According to the American Red Cross, less than two feet of water can cause the majority of vehicles to be swept away
- Recognize that it is increasingly difficult to identify flood danger when it is dark

Check your insurance to make sure you have flood coverage. Click [here](#) to learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program.

The flood is over. Now what?

You made it through the flood safely. The following are recovery steps to remember:

- Do not return home until officials have instructed you to do so
- Examine the outside of your home for loose power lines, damaged gas lines, and other damage
- Enter your home with caution, recognizing that areas may be collapsed or damaged
- If you smell natural or propane gas, exit immediately and call 9-1-1
- Do not step in standing water if power lines are damaged near your home
- Wear protective clothing when you begin your cleanup efforts.
- Cleaning products, paint, batteries, and contaminated fuel and containers should be treated as hazardous. Local authorities can assist you with disposal of these items
- Discard items that have come in contact with floodwater. According to the American Red Cross, "When in doubt, throw it out!"
- Check with the health department to make sure your water is not contaminated before use

Keeping in contact

In the event of any natural disaster, you can inform loved ones of your welfare by registering on the American Red Cross' Safe and Well website. Click [here](#) to take a look.

Download the "Emergency by American Red Cross" app on your phone. This app allows you to monitor local conditions and offers tips to keep you safe!

Did You Know? Wyoming Quick Facts

- The most damaging flood in Wyoming's history occurred in Cheyenne, Wyoming on August 1, 1985. The flood killed twelve people and injured 70, and resulted in \$65 million in property loss.
- On September 27, 1923, flooding claimed the lives of 18 people in a 60 to greater than 100 year flood. This event claimed the most lives as a result of flooding in Wyoming history.
- From 1905 to present, the total documented flood damage in Wyoming is estimated at \$126.7 million.

Reference:

<http://wyofloods.wrds.uwyo.edu/>

