

FLOODS - What to do?

Floods are the most frequent natural hazards in Canada, and the most costly in terms of property damage. Floods can occur in any region, in the countryside or in cities. In the past, floods have affected hundreds of thousands of Canadians. They can occur at any time of the year and are most often caused by heavy rainfall, rapid melting of a thick snow pack, ice jams, or more rarely, the failure of a natural or human-made dam.

Before a Flood

- Know if you live in a [flood-risk area](#).
- Prepare [emergency kits](#) for your home and car.
- Have an emergency plan that every household member knows.
- Keep important documents in watertight containers.
- Reach out to family and neighbours.
- Ensure your car has a full tank of gas.
- Have a plan in place in case you need to move pets and livestock.
- Keep an eye on the [River Forecast Centre](#) for river level and snow pack information.
- Watch for warning signs: increase in height and intensity of water flows, mudslides, debris in creeks, colour changes in water or leaning trees.

Flood-proof your home

- Seek necessary permission if you intend to work near a watercourse. Contact [FrontCounterBC](#)
- Assess any local drainage issues or suspected blocked culverts near highways. Contact [Ministry of Transportation](#) or in an Emergency Argo Road Maintenance at 1-250-493-6969.
- Build sandbag dikes — dig a trench one sack deep and two sacks wide, laying sacs in alternating crisscross directions. Information: [Emergency Management BC Sandbagging General Information](#) . [Sandbagging for Flood Protection Sandbagging Techniques](#)
- Move appliances above anticipated flood level.
- Secure and anchor propane tanks.
- Stabilize your oil tank and weigh it down with sandbags.
- Turn off utilities at main switches or valves and unplug electrical items. Information: [FortisBC](#)
- Shut off the gas valve at the meter.
- Move pesticides, weed killers, fertilizers and anything else that may contaminate water to a higher level.
- Plug all basement sewer connections; plug toilet, sink and shower drains.

If directed to evacuate

- Gather your emergency kit(s).
- Follow instructions from local officials via TV, radio or social media.
- Move to a safe location outside the impacted area.
- Return home only when authorities say it is safe to do so.



During a Flood

- Listen to the radio to find out what areas are affected and what roads are safe, where to go and what to do if the local emergency team asks you leave your home.
- If possible, move electrical appliances to upper floors.
- Anchor fuel supplies, such as oil tanks.
- Check out the [Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen](#) website for information and sand bag pick up locations. We will soon be launching the Civic Ready Emergency Communication system where users can receive updates via email, text message or telephone call of events across the Region.
- Never attempt to drive or walk in floodwater. A mere six inches of fast-moving water can knock over an adult. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pick-up trucks.

After a Flood

- Re-entering your home - do not return home until authorities advise that it is safe to do so.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded, keeping an eye out for debris.
- Be aware that floodwaters often erode roads and walkways, making them less stable.
- Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Photograph damage to your property and speak to your insurance agent.

Additional resources

- [PreparedBC](#)
- [Insurance Bureau of Canada](#)
- [Government of Canada Flood Ready](#)
- [Natural Resources Canada Floods](#)
- [FloodSmart Canada](#)
- [Emergency Management BC Potential Flood Hazards](#)
- [Emergency Management BC Sandbagging General Information](#)
- [Sandbagging for Flood Protection](#)
- [Sandbagging Techniques](#)
- [Worksafe BC - Safe Sandbagging](#)
- [DriveBC](#)