

Flooding: A Guide for Property Owners

Dealing with floods

There are a number of shoreline and low-lying areas within the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's jurisdiction that are at risk of flooding. While there are limits to what can be done to prevent flooding, there are steps that property owners can take to manage the risks that floods pose to people and properties.

The NPCA works to warn residents about floods. Floods can occur at any time of year. The impacted areas are not only at risk from extreme rainfall events but are also vulnerable Great Lakes flooding as a result of high winds and wave action.

What to do before a flood: how to prepare your family & property

- Know if your property is located in a flood zone. You can refer to the NPCA's Watershed Explorer mapping tool on this website to find this information.
- Prepare an Emergency Plan that can be initiated should you need to evacuate during a flood emergency.
- Have a 72-hour Emergency Kit ("Go Bag") that includes essentials your family may need. Remember to include items like medications and items for pets.
- Download the Alertable mobile app to be able to receive important flood related messages directly on your mobile phone.
- Consider installing a sump pump in the basement and backflow preventers in the basement floor drains. Consider having a portable generator and a back-up sump pump available.
- Move important items away from areas that may be subject to flooding (like a basement) to upper levels of your residence or store valuable items in waterproof containers.
- Raise all electronics at least 18 inches off the floor.

- Consult your electricity and fuel suppliers (oil, natural gas, propane) for instructions on how to safely shut down and protect furnaces and other equipment, and the steps that need to be taken after a flood before restarting equipment.
- Consider installing storm shutters on windows.
- Consider grading your yard to direct stormwater away from your home's foundation.
- Consider upgrading your window wells to ensure a good seal at the foundation and extend them a minimum of 6 inches above grade. Provide good drainage inside the window well and install window well covers.
- Speak with your property insurer about insurance options.

What to do when a flood is imminent or occurring

- Watch for flood warnings and advisories on television, radio social media and the NPCA's website.
- Follow the NPCA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for important flood-related messages.
- Follow the instructions of emergency response officials, such as the police, fire fighters and municipal staff.
- Remove valuable items from the basement and lower levels.
- If you have a generator and/or portable pump, test them and have fuel on hand. (Only use fuel-burning generators outdoors in well ventilated areas away from building openings).
- Make sure your sump pump is working.
- Follow the instructions from your utility supplier (gas, electrical, propane, etc.) to safely shut down and protect furnaces and other appliances.
- Prepare to evacuate if necessary. Collect essential items such as cash, medication, important papers, identification and change of clothes. Bring your pets. Consider evacuating your residence if streets in your neighborhood are flooded. Emergency vehicles (fire trucks, ambulance, police cars, etc.) may not be able to get to your home.

- Resist the urge to tour flooded areas. You may be putting your own life at risk and could interfere with the work of emergency responders.
- If a road has been closed, obey the signs and take alternate routes. It is an offence to drive on a closed road and could void your insurance.

What to do after a flood

- Do not return home until authorities advise it is safe.
- Report broken or downed utility lines. If you see a downed power line caused by a storm or flood event, maintain a distance of 10 metres or more and report it to your local utility or Hydro One at [1-800-434-1235](tel:1-800-434-1235).
- Consult your insurer about steps to take if your property is flooded.
- Exercise caution when re-entering your home. If the main power switch was not turned off prior to flooding, do not re-enter your home until a qualified electrician has determined it is safe to do so.
- If your main electrical panel was under water, it must be cleaned, dried and tested by a qualified electrician to determine if it is safe. Do not use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse breaker panels until they have been checked by the power company.
- If natural gas lines were under water, contact your gas supplier before resuming service. If natural gas appliances were under water, have them checked by an approved heating, ventilation and air conditioning contractor.
- If your well has been affected by flood waters, it is recommended that you boil your water for at least one minute at a rolling boil, or purchase water from a safe source. Before resuming normal use of the well, have the water tested for possible bacteria and pollutants.