

Staying safe **before** a flood

Floods are dangerous, but you can take steps to protect yourself, your family and your home.



Choose a safe place to live

- Don't build a house or live near rivers, streams or areas that flood often. If you must live in these areas, make sure your home is built on higher ground and is strong enough to withstand floods.
- Talk to your neighbours and local officials to learn about flood risks in your area. Find out what is being done to reduce flood danger.
- If there are flood maps, check if your home is in a flood zone.



Build a flood-resistant home

- If you live in a flood-prone area, make sure your house has a strong foundation and is elevated.
- Understand the land around your home, where water flows and where it collects, and local weather patterns. This will help you stay safe.



Store important things safely

- Keep valuable items and dangerous materials above where floodwaters are likely to reach.
- Store important documents (IDs, passports, birth certificates, school records, legal papers and vaccination records) in a waterproof bag.
- Pack a bag with clothes, toiletries, a radio, batteries, any medications you need, important information, phone chargers, cash and emergency contact numbers in case you need to evacuate.



Protect your animals

- If you have livestock or pets, think about moving them to a safe place ahead of any flooding.
- If you have large animals you can't move easily, consider building a platform on which they can stand during a flood.
- Communities heavily dependent on livestock should consider building cooperative animal shelters to minimize economic and social losses during floods.
- Vaccinate animals to prevent disease spread and treat any infected animals.
- Dispose of carcasses properly, and segregate sick animals during and post flooding. If local authorities are disposing of carcasses, support them.



Keep informed

Pay attention to weather reports, listen to the radio and follow instructions from local officials. If a flood happens, listen to the news and check for information from emergency services.

- A flood watch means a flood might happen in your area.
- A flood warning means a flood is happening or will happen very soon.
- **Evacuation orders:** if you are told to evacuate or if you feel unsafe, leave your home.
- **Stay put:** if you are told not to evacuate but your home might flood, move to a safe place inside and take any essential items with you.
- **Use climate services:** national meteorological and hydrological services should disseminate seasonal outlooks and extreme weather warnings in community-friendly formats. Community education on interpreting these forecasts is central to climate-smart preparedness behaviour.



Prepare your home

- **Turn off electricity:** switch off the power if water is likely to reach electrical outlets, if you see downed power lines or if you are evacuating.
- **Shut off utilities:** if you are leaving or a flood is coming, turn off gas and water at the mains switches.
- **Fire safety:** make sure you have a fire extinguisher and everyone in your family knows how to use it.
- **Stock up:** if you have to stay home during a flood, keep enough supplies to last 3–5 days. Ensure you have:
 - bottled water;
 - canned and dried foods;
 - first-aid kit with essential medications;
 - a battery-powered radio;
 - flashlights with extra batteries;
 - blankets;
 - soap, sanitary napkins and other hygiene supplies;
 - mosquito nets; and
 - a fully charged cell phone.

