

FACT SHEET #3

Being Prepared: Flood Proofing your Home and Family

Know the risks –

- Know if you live in a flood-risk area
- Watch for warning signs in your nearby environment: increases in water height and intensity in streams and rivers, mudslides, debris in creeks, colour changes in water, leaning trees or cracks developing on hillsides
- Stay tuned to local radio stations for directions from local officials as to what to do in case of severe flooding risk
- Know where you can get information about weather reports and current conditions

Prepare your family –

- Put together an emergency supply kit, including at least a three-day's supply of food and water for each family member. Include a windup or battery-powered radio, flashlight and batteries, prescription medications and important papers
- Ensure each member of your family has warm clothing and waterproof footwear
- Ensure that each family member has identification. Name tags on children's clothing, wallet cards and wristbands are useful in case you are separated
- Remind every member of your household on the location of your family emergency meeting place
- Have an out-of-province contact
- Know what to do if an evacuation is necessary
- Make arrangements for your pets and any livestock
- Prepare to follow instructions of emergency officials

When there is immediate danger of flooding, and if there is time –

- Move basement furniture and other items to a higher floor
- Electrical service - Shut off power to your home, but do not attempt to turn off power if the room is already flooded
- Electrical appliances – Unplug electrical appliances and move them to a higher level
- Get information about electrical safety www.bchydro.com/safety/ or www.safetyauthority.ca/?q=flooding_information
- Natural gas – Know how to safely turn off your gas go to: [www.terasengas.com/ Safety/SafetyHomeWork/EmergencyPreparedness/Floods/default.htm](http://www.terasengas.com/Safety/SafetyHomeWork/EmergencyPreparedness/Floods/default.htm)
- Gas or oil furnaces and appliances - Oil or water tanks will float if not full. If unable to fill, weigh down with sandbags or wedge against a solid object. Propane gas tanks may float whether full or empty you might want to tie a chain or cable around the tank to anchor it and prevent it from floating away
- Plumbing fixtures and water supplies - Turn off the water supply. Plug all basement sewage connections (toilets, sinks, showers) with a wooden plug or other device. The plug should be held in place with a heavy weight

- Items that may cause contamination – pesticides, weed killers, fertilizers and other such items should be moved to higher levels
- Sewer system – To relieve overloading, disconnect any downspouts that drain to them
- Outdoor items – Move to higher ground all items such as furniture and barbeques that could be damaged by flooding or which may float and cause damage
- Sandbagging – If you have time to construct a dike, build it on high ground, close to your home. This way, fewer sandbags will be needed and the dike will be less exposed to any nearby streams. Dig a trench one bag in depth and two bags wide as a foundation for the dike structure. A dike must be three times as wide at its base as it is high.
- Polyethylene sheeting – In preparation for severe flooding, you may wish to use polyethylene (plastic) sheeting on the exterior lower levels of your home. Step-by-step instructions are found in the Flood Proofing Your Home guide at: http://www.pep.gov.bc.ca/hazard_preparedness/flood_tips/Floodproof.pdf

If you must evacuate –

- Always follow the instructions of local emergency officials
- Turn off and unplug all appliances, lock doors and windows
- Know how to safely turn off all utilities at the main switches or valves
- Take your grab-and-go emergency supply kit with you
- Leave a note in your mailbox saying where you've gone and inform an out-of-province contact
- *Special consideration needs to be given to those with special needs:* tell visually impaired people the nature of the emergency and guide them through any dangerous areas; for those with hearing impairment, write out what is happening and tell them the evacuation procedure
- Listen to emergency personnel and follow their directions. Do not take shortcuts, as you may end up in a blocked or dangerous area
- Do not walk through moving water. Water can be deeper than it appears. It only takes 60 cm (2 ft.) to sweep a car away and as little as 15 cm (6 in.) of moving water can cause you to fall
- Register with the local reception centre if you are evacuated, so emergency responders know you are safe how to reach you
- For more information about personal emergency preparedness, go to www.pep.bc.ca

Contact:

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