



Preparing for a Flood

[How do you know if a flood is approaching?](#)

[Ensuring a Safe Drinking Water & Food Supply](#)

[Sewage Disposal Systems](#)

[Safety Precautions](#)

[Preparing for Power Outages](#)

[Gas Safety](#)

[Contacts & Other Information Sources](#)

How do you know if a flood is approaching your area?

Stay tuned into your local news media (radio & television) for the most up to date information.

You can also check the [Provincial River Forecast Centre](#) for the latest updates and flood advisories or refer to the [Emergency Management B.C.](#) website. [Environment Canada's weather office](#) can also be a valuable resource to get a better idea of whether a great deal of precipitation or warm weather is in the forecast.

For an overall view and for additional information, please visit the Provincial Emergency Program's [Flood Watch Notifications and Conditions Forecast](#).

Ensuring a Safe Drinking Water & Food Supply

There are some things you can do to prepare in advance of a flood, to help minimize impacts to your water system, if you have your own water intake from a stream or you have a domestic well as the source of your water supply.

You can help to protect your water supply and that of any downstream users by moving any pesticides, chemicals (including disinfectants for water treatment) and/or other contaminants to an elevated location so that they don't get flushed away or dissolve in the floodwaters.

You can armour private surface water intakes by placing sandbags around them. This may minimize damage to your surface water intake during a flood when debris in streams may be greater than normal.

If you have a domestic well, ensure that your wellhead is protected – that it has a surface seal and a cap. A registered well-driller is required to do this work. The Ministry of Environment has a list of [registered well-drillers](#) in the Province.

Be ready to turn off the electricity to your well pump **just prior to the flood**.

Since water supplies can be impacted by flooding, ensure that you have at least a **72 hour supply of water** on hand. You can either store bottled water which can be purchased from the store in advance or fill clean plastic milk jugs (or other containers)





with water and store in the freezer. Even if there is a power outage, the frozen water will thaw slowly and will provide safe drinking water and can double as a coolant to prolong food from spoiling.

To ensure that you are prepared, you should stock up on food that does not require heating or refrigeration. Store supplies on upper levels of your home where they should not be affected by flooding.

Sewage Disposal Systems

Flooding can introduce a number of health hazards into your home, including sewage back-up through floor drains and basement sinks. If your home is at risk from flooding, consider blocking these drains, and remove as much material from basements as possible. If flood waters cover your septic field, stop using your sewage system. To avoid having an empty tank that could be “floated” out of flooded ground, damaging your system, you should not pump your septic tank. For other actions you can take, please refer to “[Sewerage Systems and Flooding](#)” for more information.

Safety Precautions

Since it is possible that flooding may interrupt normal deliveries to local pharmacies, make sure you have first aid supplies and at least two weeks supply of any prescription medication available, and protected from flood damage. Ensure these supplies are part of your grab & go kit if evacuation may become necessary. People with medical conditions requiring regular access specialized medical services should consult their local [health authority](#) if they live in a potentially affected area.

Tips for preparing your home

Emergency Management BC provides helpful information in the document [Preparing Your Family & Home: A Guide to Prepare for, Respond to and Recover from Flooding Events](#) in order to minimize damage.

Electrical Safety

In any area where immediate flooding is anticipated, it is essential to shut off all electrical power by turning off the main service switch. For information on how to safely prepare for power outages, please visit the BC Hydro’s “[Home Outage Preparation](#)” web page.

Note: Always have a flashlight and batteries ready - flooding may occur at night.

Gas Safety

If you have enough advance warning prior to a flood, protect your appliances.

Instructions on safely preparing gas appliances for potential flooding is available from [FortisBC](#).

Preventing Vermin and Pests

During a flood, wild animals and vermin may become flooded out of their homes and will be searching for new places to live. Reduce the chance that their next home, will be your home by eliminating food sources, and closing off any access routes like broken windows or screens.

Contacts and Further Information

- Drinking Water Concerns – contact the Drinking Water Officer contact in your area
- Onsite Sewage Concerns – contact the local [health authority](#)’s Environmental Health Office
- [Emergency Management BC](#) for information about disaster preparedness and recovery
- Livestock and poultry - see “[Agriculture Sector Emergency Preparedness Tips](#)”