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## FACTSHEET

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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Emergency Management BC

### Flooding

Flooding is a common, naturally occurring event in British Columbia. Although it can happen at any time of year, the most severe floods typically occur in the spring from the influences of heavy rain and snowmelt run-off. The resulting surge of water is usually between April and July and is known as freshet.

#### Facts:

##### Flood Preparedness

- Flood waters move fast, so develop a household plan, put together your emergency kit and connect with your neighbours. For details, visit: <http://ow.ly/OU2Y308aIz>.
- Contact your local authority to learn about the emergency response plan for your area.
- If you face a threatening flood situation, park vehicles away from streams and waterways, move electrical appliances to upper floors and make sure to anchor fuel supplies. Listen to local officials if you are asked to evacuate.

##### Protect Your Home and Property

- There are many things you can do to help protect your home and property. Take time to clean your gutters, maintain perimeter drains, clear storm drains of debris, ensure waterspouts are away from your residence, and complete some simple landscaping to manage run-off.
- Contact an insurance agent about flood insurance for your home and business.

##### Drinking Water/Water Supply

- If your water supply is unsafe to drink, a Boil Water Advisory or a similar notice will be issued by your water supplier (if you are not on an individual water or independent water source).
- If you are on a private domestic well or water source, you should get your water tested to ensure that it is safe to drink. The BC Health File “Should I Get My Well Water Tested” will provide you with additional information on this subject: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/well-water-testing>.

##### Sewage Disposal Systems

- Septic systems can be affected by flooding as the water table rises. You can minimize the impact by reducing the amount of water handled by your system. Should flooding of your septic field and tank area occur, there is very little that can be done. You should discontinue use of your system, and do not empty your septic tank until the system can be evaluated.

### Mould & Indoor Air Quality

- Flooding can saturate insulation and wallboard, carpets and furniture and create favourable environments for mould development. Mould can affect people's health, contributing to respiratory problems, allergies, and can irritate eyes, and cause skin infections and rashes. Action to remove saturated items from the home and dry the home out should be taken as soon as possible after flooding to reduce the opportunity for mould growth.

### Safety Precautions

- All electrical wiring in buildings that has been partially or fully covered by flood water must be checked by a qualified electrician or electrical inspector before being put into service again. Any loose wires should be considered "live" and are a definite hazard.
- If water levels were high enough to cover the gas meter, call FortisBC or your local gas provider to check your meter and regulator before using your gas system. Flood waters may have shifted your home or caused other stresses to the gas piping.
- If you smell gas, or if there is evidence of a gas leak, do not enter the building. Turn your gas off at the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter. Using a wrench or other suitable tool, give the valve a quarter turn in either direction so that it is crosswise to the pipe. Call the 24-hour emergency line at 1-800-663-9911, your local fire department or 911.

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