

# Kent County Health Department Flooding Fact Sheet



Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters.

## Know What to Expect

- Know your area's flood risk. If you're unsure, call your local Red Cross chapter, or planning and zoning department of your city, township, or village.
- Be alert to the possibility of flooding if it has been raining hard for several hours or steadily raining for several days.

## Plan Ahead

- Raise your furnace, water heater, and electric panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- Check to see if you have insurance that covers flooding. If not, find out how to get flood insurance.
- Keep insurance policies, other important documents and valuables in a safe-deposit box.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit.

For a list of supplies to include in your disaster supplies kit, see

[www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/EmergencyPrep/Fact\\_Sheets.htm](http://www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/EmergencyPrep/Fact_Sheets.htm)

## When a Flood WATCH is Issued

- A flood WATCH means a flood is possible in your area. A flood WARNING means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.
- Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home.
- Fill your car's gas tank, in case an evacuation is necessary.

- Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice.

## When a Flood WARNING is Issued

- Listen to local radio or TV stations for flood information. If told to evacuate, do so as quickly as possible.
- If you think flooding has already started, don't wait to be told to evacuate. Act quickly as you may only have seconds to escape.
- Move to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains.
- Do not drive around barricades! They are in place for your safety. Two feet of water will float your car! If you come up to a flooded road, STOP! Turn around and go another way.
- If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. Almost half of flash flood fatalities occur in vehicles.
- All it takes is six inches of swiftly moving water to knock a person off of his/her feet.

## What to Do After a Flood or Flash Flood

- Avoid disaster areas. Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations and put you at further risk. Hazards may include

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contaminated waters, crumbled roads, mudflows and other hazards.

- Continue to listen to local radio and TV and return home only after authorities indicate it's safe to do so.
- Stay out of any building if flood waters remain around the building. Flood waters often weaken foundations, causing sinking, floors can crack or break and buildings can collapse.
- Report downed utility lines to the proper authorities.
- When entering a building after a flood, use extreme caution.

Precautions to take include:

- Wearing sturdy shoes to prevent cuts.
- Using battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to prevent the possibility of a fire.
- Examining walls, floors, doors, staircases and windows to make sure the building isn't in danger of collapsing.
- Inspecting foundations for cracks or other damage.
- Checking for fire hazards, gas leaks, electrical system damage, and sewage and waterline damage.
- Being alert for animals, especially poisonous snakes, that may have come into buildings with the flood waters.
- Watching for loose plaster, drywall and ceilings that could fall.

For information on how to prevent disease and how to clean-up after a flood see “Disease Prevention – After the Flood or Sewage Back-up” and “Cleaning up the

Mess – After the Flood or Sewage Back-up” at

[www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/EmergencyPrep/Fact\\_Sheets.htm](http://www.accesskent.com/Health/HealthDepartment/EmergencyPrep/Fact_Sheets.htm)

### Additional Resources

For more information on floods:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Emergency Preparedness & Response <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>
- American Red Cross [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- National Weather Service [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)