

**Calgary**



# Flood Readiness

Understand. Prepare. Stay Informed.

**A GUIDE TO PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY AND PROPERTY**



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## How you can prepare for flooding

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### Make a plan and practise it

One of the biggest sources of stress in an emergency is not knowing where your family members are. It's important to make a plan with your family members to ensure their safety and your own.

Emergencies and disasters, by their very nature, are unexpected events. They may occur when family members are not together. Your children may be in school, you may be at work or you may have an elderly parent who lives across the city. If phone lines are compromised or transportation is affected, what will you do?

As part of your family plan, you should plan a safe meeting spot outside your neighbourhood in case you are unable to return to your home or neighbourhood. Everyone must know the location of the meeting spot and the phone number of your emergency contact person.

Engage your family in preparing your plan and once it is complete, practise it.

Consider these factors when making your plan:

- **Transportation access and options:** What are all the ways you can get to and from your home, work or neighbourhood? What are your mobility options, such as taking public transit, driving, biking and walking.
- **A meeting place:** Where will your family members meet after an emergency or disaster? Having a few designated locations may be necessary, especially if a disaster occurs.
- **What other emergency plans may impact your plan:** What emergency plans are in place at your child's school or at your place of work? Will you be able to pick up your child in an emergency? Have you designated a family member or friend to pick your child up if you are unable to do so? Taking into account what other emergency may impact your own plan will help you to develop a better plan.
- **Communications inaccessibility:** During emergencies, communication services like telephone land lines, cellular and Internet services may be overwhelmed or impacted. Sometimes, local phone lines are overloaded or compromised by the disaster, but long distance calls, emails or texts may go through. To ensure you can locate one another, identify an out-of-town contact. Provide a few ways to get hold of your out-of-town contact, such as an email address, land line number, cell phone number and a link to his/her social media account. Your out-of-town contact can relay messages to other family members should you not be able to contact your family members directly.
- **Emergency kit:** Having the resources and tools to keep you safe and healthy during an emergency not only helps you, but also allows emergency responders time and resources to look after those less able to care for themselves. Have 72-hour emergency kit and keep it in an easy-to-access location. (See page 14 for more details). The City provides Important Documents bags to store copies of your important documents safely. The bags come with a checklist to help you know which documents to store. You can request a bag by calling [311](tel:311).





- **Your pet's needs:** If you are evacuated from your home or unable to return home during an emergency, how will your pet(s) be cared for? A care plan may save your pet's life.

Ensure you have a temporary, alternative place for your dog or cat to go for safekeeping in the event of an emergency.

The City also provides cat and dog owners with a door sticker and a window sticker to inform emergency services that pets are in the residence.

Call **311** or visit the Animal Services Centre at 2201 Portland Street S.E. during regular facility hours to get stickers and information leaflet.

Place your Protective Services Pet Sticker on your residence's door or window. Place the sticker on a main floor door or window, facing the street, as close to your front entrance as possible.

- **Utility shut-offs:** Knowing where the shut-offs for your utility services and appliances are and how to use them may reduce the damage to your property. If you have time to do so prior to evacuating, shut off your utilities and appliances.
- **Resources and services:** Do you know how to access help if you need it? Talk about any specific requirements your family may have and what you will do to take care of each need. This may involve mobility restrictions, important medication or a range of non-visible disabilities that could impair a loved one's ability to respond in an emergency.

Keep a paper copy of important phone numbers with you because if power is not available and electronic devices cannot be accessed, you may not recall contact information when you need it.

Get the Family Emergency Contact List at [calgary.ca/cema](http://calgary.ca/cema).

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## Make a kit

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Each disaster is unique and different actions may be required. You may have to leave your home – an evacuation or you may be instructed to stay in your home – sheltering-in-place. **If you are instructed by emergency personnel to evacuate, you must leave the area.** The decision to order an evacuation is based on safety and risks to residents remaining in their homes.

In a large emergency or a disaster, the first 72 hours are the busiest for first responders. Often, resources are stretched and emergency personnel may not be able to respond immediately.

It is important to that care for yourself and your family for a minimum of 72 hours.

Make a kit with supplies to help you be self-sufficient for 72 hours.

Your 72-hour kit should have basic supplies, be organized and easy to find.

Many items can be found in your home already, but if you're instructed to evacuate, you may not have time to gather supplies.

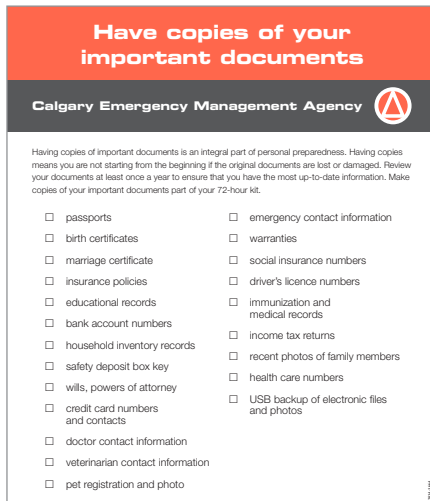
Keep your kit in a backpack or suitcase, preferably with wheels, in an accessible location like a front hallway closet.

Supplies for a family can get heavy. Consider separating personal supplies into individual backpacks so they are more portable.



## Important documents

Make copies of your important documents and store them in your 72-hour kit. The City has Important Documents bags available that you can use to store copies of your documents. You may want to consider having two Important Documents bags: one in your 72-hour kit and another in a safe location (with a trusted friend or relative, or in locked storage at your workplace). Documents for which you should have copies include:



- passports
- birth certificates
- marriage certificate
- insurance policies
- educational records
- bank account numbers
- household inventory records
- safety deposit box key
- wills, powers of attorney
- credit card numbers and contacts
- doctor contact information
- veterinarian contact information
- pet registration and photo
- emergency contact information
- warranties
- social insurance numbers
- driver's licence numbers
- immunization and medical records
- income tax returns
- recent photos of family members
- health care numbers
- USB backup of electronic files and photos

For more information visit [calgary.ca/cema](http://calgary.ca/cema).

## 72-hour emergency kit checklist

- water (4L per person per day – 2L for drinking and 2L for hygiene. You will need more water if you have pets.)
- non-perishable food (canned or dried food, energy bars, etc.)
- manual can opener
- first aid kit
- prescription medication
- wind-up (crank) or battery-powered flashlight and radio
- external battery pack or charger, extra batteries
- warm clothing and blankets or sleeping bags
- important documents
- cash in small bills or coins
- personal hygiene items (soap, dry shampoo, etc.)

Depending on your needs, there are many more items that you can add to your kit. For more information and helpful tips, visit [calgary.ca/cema](http://calgary.ca/cema).

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## How you can protect your property

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### Contact your insurance agent

It is important to be aware of and how your insurance policy covers flooding. Most policies do not provide coverage for certain types of flooding or they have restrictions and place limits on flood risks. Talk to your insurance representative to know what your policy covers and what you can do to make a potential insurance claim easier, such as maintaining a good inventory of your belongings.

### Move valuable documents and personal items

Safely store important documents like insurance papers, wills, tax returns and passports in watertight bags and consider keeping a copy at another location. Store important personal items like photos, family videos or treasured mementos in water-tight bags and move them to a safe place away from areas that have the potential for water damage, such as on higher levels in your home and away from windows.

### Move electronic equipment

If possible, move televisions, computers, appliances, stereo and electronic equipment to higher levels in your home and away from windows.

### Move business records

Businesses should move business records and dangerous goods from basements or lower floors to upper floors. The City offers a publication called “Is your business prepared?” that provides tips and instructions about how to protect your business during emergencies and disasters. Additionally, we offer information on how businesses can develop strategies and plans to ensure continued operation during and after a disruption. For more information on how you can protect your business

from flooding, visit [calgary.ca/floodinfo](http://calgary.ca/floodinfo) and for more information on planning for business continuity in disasters, visit [calgary.ca/cema](http://calgary.ca/cema).

### Move waste

Both homeowners and businesses should also ensure any chemicals or waste are stored at ground level.

### Improve yard drainage

Prevent water from collecting beside your house and seeping into the basement. Your yard and garden areas should slope away from your house and onto a grassed area in the front or backyard – not toward a neighbour's yard.

Check around outside walls, under stairs and decks where soil settles, and fill in any hollow or sunken areas.

Cover window wells with a plastic protector to prevent rainfall from collecting. In winter, remove snow that is near the foundation of your home.

### Prevent sewage and stormwater backup

When water on flooded streets drains into sewer manholes, pipes may become overloaded and back up, which may cause basement flooding. To help mitigate against sewage entering your basement, install a back-flow prevention device on your sewer pipe. This can also be individually installed in basement showers, toilets and sinks. Contact a qualified plumber for more information.

Weeping tile is a perforated pipe surrounding basement foundations. It is used to drain high groundwater directly onto the ground above the 1:100 year flood level elevation. For weeping tile systems that are directly connected to the storm water system, a weeping tile backup prevention device may lessen the flow of water from entering basements when the storm sewer system overloads.

Although not guaranteed to work, the following steps, taken prior to evacuation and if safe to do so, may help prevent sewage from backing up into your basement:

- Install the cap in the basement sewer floor drain.
- If the cap cannot be found, stuff rags down the floor drain tightly enough to help prevent sewage backing up into the basement. Secure the rags by placing a heavy object on top.
- Plug basement toilets, shower drains, sinks and sewer standpipe openings in the same way. The standpipe may be located by following the discharge hose from a clothes washer or a water softener.

Know where your property's floor drain, clean-out sewer line and back-flow prevention device are located. (Not every home has a back-flow prevention device).

### Be smart about eavestroughs and downspouts

Eavestroughs and extensions should drain at least 1.5 metres (5 feet) away from your house. Water should drain onto a landscaped area so the water has the opportunity to soak into the ground.

For front or backyard eavestroughs, direct the downspout extensions away from your home's foundation onto your yard and away from your neighbours' homes. Don't connect eavestroughs extensions or downspouts to other pipes that drain directly onto a street, lane or sidewalk. Gravel and/or other debris can enter stormwater drains and/or water from eavestroughs or downspouts can cause gravel lanes to wash away, which may increase the chances of flooding in your community.



Don't connect extensions from your eavestroughs to the sanitary sewer line or weeping tile. Excess water could overload pipes and cause flooding in your basement.

To reduce excessive rainwater from running down the sides of your house, clear leaves and other debris from your eavestroughs so that rainwater will not accumulate and seep into your basement.

### Know how much to water

Over-watering your lawn and flowerbeds next to your house can cause seepage into the basement and also reduce the ability of your lawn to absorb heavy rainfall. A leak in an underground sprinkler system can do the same thing. If you have an underground system, check for leaks regularly and drain it every fall before the ground freezes.

Your lawn only needs 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water per week, including from sprinklers and natural rainfall. You can purchase gauges to connect to your automatic irrigation system to avoid overwatering. If you are watering your lawn with a sprinkler, put a frisbee upside down on your lawn. When it's full, that is all the water your lawn needs for the week. Remember to take into account natural rainfall when calculating the total.

### Maintain your property's lot grading

Lowering the grade of your property for a walk-out basement, garage or any other reason, creates a pathway for water to enter your home.

### Keep drainage gutters clear of debris

Some properties have a concrete drainage gutter in the backyard. It should be kept clear of debris, so that water can drain from your yard.

### Report plugged storm drains

Download The City's [311](#) app or visit [calgary.ca](#) and complete an online service request to report a plugged storm drain or call [311](#).

### Park vehicles on high ground

If you have low spots on the street where water collects, park your vehicles on higher ground.

### Check your sump pump

A sump pump removes water from your basement. If you have one, check it periodically to ensure it is in good working condition. It's important to know that your sump pump will not function without power. In case of power outages, have a back-up power source on hand, like a generator, but be sure not to put the generator inside your home.





# Stay informed



When Calgary is at its greatest risk of flooding (May 15 to July 15), stay up to date with conditions and ensure you are prepared to act as needed. All advisories and updates can be viewed at [calgary.ca/floodinfo](https://calgary.ca/floodinfo).

#### The best ways to get information:

- Visit [calgary.ca/floodinfo](https://calgary.ca/floodinfo).
- Listen to local media stations.
- Monitor social media (Facebook, Twitter) from The City of Calgary.
- Download The City of Calgary alerts apps that are most applicable to you, including News, Road Conditions, Pathways and Bikeways, and more.
- Listen for and sign up for Alberta Emergency Alerts (AEA). Alberta Emergency Alerts interrupt local broadcasting. As well, you can download the AEA app to a smart device to receive notifications.

For more technical or background information:

- Visit Alberta Environment's website and download the river monitoring app by searching for "Alberta Rivers" on your device.
- Follow Environment Canada on social media.

# Important: safety precautions

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## Keep this guide where you can find it.

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Calls to 911 and 311 can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If flooding happens, here's what to do:

- Call 911 if you are in immediate danger.
- If you have minor sewage backup or storm sewer backup, call 311. If your basement is flooding quickly, call 911. Do not enter the basement. Do not flush toilets or turn on taps, as this will cause more flooding.
- If you smell gas in your home, leave immediately. On the way out, leave the doors open to air out your home. Don't touch any electrical appliances or switches; they can spark and ignite natural gas. When you are out of your home, call 911.
- If your natural gas appliances are affected by flooding, call ATCO Gas at 403-310-5678
- If your household electrical installation or appliances are affected by flooding, call ENMAX at 403-514-6100.
- If the streets are flooded, stay off them. Flood water can hide hazards like open manholes. It takes only 15 centimetres (six inches) or less of rushing water to knock down an average adult and less than 2.5 centimetres (one inch) to drown.

Learn more and stay informed: [calgary.ca/floodinfo](http://calgary.ca/floodinfo)