



Be ready when the rain falls and water rises

Floods are the most common, destructive, natural disaster on earth. At times, flooding will begin slowly, allowing people to prepare or evacuate. More severe flooding and flash floods can begin quickly and appear with little to no warning.

Climate experts believe that there is a 95% chance of El Nino weather conditions lasting through early 2016.¹ As a result, severe flooding and mudslides in wildfire areas are expected to occur. Homeowners in areas where wildfires have destroyed vegetation—and especially those living downslope of wildfire damage—are at high risk during and after heavy rainfall. Consider the following measures that can be taken in advance of heavy rains or flooding:

- **Devise an evacuation plan.** Plan ahead to know what items you need to take with you and where family members will meet if you are separated or cell phone connectivity is lost.
- **Identify safe routes to higher ground from your home and workplace.** If you must travel, do not cross a flowing stream with water above your knees. Strong currents can sweep you away in as little as six inches of water. If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground.
- **Prepare an emergency kit.** Your kit should include non-perishable foods for family members and pets, water, flashlight, battery-powered radio, spare batteries, manual can opener, cell phone with battery-powered charger, first aid kit, medications, blankets and other items.
- **Make copies of all important documents.** Store the originals somewhere outside your home, such as in a safe deposit box. Keep an electronic copy on a thumb drive or other storage device.
- **Have your roof inspected by a professional.** Missing, damaged or aging components, as well as areas with algae or heavy leaf accumulation, can cause a roof to leak.
- **Clear rain gutters and downspouts of debris.** This will help divert water away from your home as designed. Gutter guards can be installed to prevent debris from entering gutters. Debris-clogged drains cause water to pool on flat roofs.
- **Consider purchasing flood barriers.** Properly filled and placed, these can divert moving water around buildings instead of through them. Sandbag alternatives are recommended over regular sandbags for many reasons, including that they provide more coverage and are lighter.
- **Contact your independent insurance advisor to see if you are eligible for flood insurance.** If you already have it, review your policy to ensure you have enough coverage.

For additional information on flood preparedness, visit www.emergency.cdc.gov/disasters



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¹ http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.html

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