

Knowing the emergencies you could face allows you and your family to plan your response. Identifying responses unique to each emergency makes it easier to act fast when seconds matter.

Floods are a frequent hazard in Alberta and can occur at any time of year due to heavy rainfall, ice jams, rapid melting of snow and dam failures. Low-lying areas along rivers or in ravines have a high risk of flooding; if possible, avoid building or buying properties in these areas. Flooding is not limited to these areas and can happen anywhere with little-to-no warning.

Before a flood

How to prepare

- ▶ Make a plan. Every household should have an emergency plan, which includes important information to help guide you and your loved ones, pets and livestock through an emergency. View our [preparing for emergencies tip sheet](#) for more information about making your household emergency plan.
- ▶ Build an emergency kit. Individuals and families should be prepared to take care of themselves for at least 72 hours. View our [preparing for emergencies tip sheet](#) for more information about building an emergency kit.
- ▶ Stay aware. Download the [Alberta Emergency Alert app](#) and [Alberta Rivers: Data and Advisories app](#) to get advisories and public safety alerts directly to your phone.

Protect your home and belongings

- ▶ Store important documents such as passports, birth certificates, banking information and insurance papers in a safe place in an above-ground location.
- ▶ Use weather protection sealant around basement windows and the base of ground-level doors.
- ▶ Ensure downspout drainage moves water away from your property.
- ▶ Install a sump pump and zero reverse flow valves in basement floor drains, where possible.

During a flood

Never attempt to cross a flooded area. Water is powerful; six inches of moving water can knock over an adult, 12 inches can carry away a car and two feet can move mid-sized vehicles.

Prepare to leave

- ▶ Stay informed of the situation by listening to updates from authorities. Follow all directions and instructions from authorities.
- ▶ Have your emergency kit, including your important documents and medications, ready to go.

Protect your home and belongings

- ▶ Move furniture, electrical appliances and other belongings to floors above ground level.
- ▶ Consult your electricity and/or fuel supplier for instructions on safeguarding electrical, natural gas and/or propane equipment. Do not shut off your electricity if water is present.
- ▶ Remove toxic substances, such as pesticides and insecticides, from the flood area to prevent pollution.
- ▶ Disconnect eavestroughs if they are connected to the house sewer.
- ▶ Remove toilet bowls and plug basement sewer drains and toilet connections with a wooden stopper.

Safeguard pets and livestock

Avoid locking farm animals in enclosures, such as barns, as this could result in drowning if they become trapped.

Evacuation alerts and orders

Evacuation alerts warn the public of a potential or current threat. If an evacuation alert is issued, prepare to evacuate.

Evacuation orders are mandatory and are issued for public safety.

Evacuation survival tips

- ▶ Leave the area as soon as authorities tell you to.
- ▶ Follow the evacuation routes specified by authorities. Do not take shortcuts.
- ▶ Drive carefully with headlights on. Make way for pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- ▶ Avoid low-lying areas such as ravines or underpasses that could flood quickly.
- ▶ If your vehicle is caught in fast-rising waters and stalls, all occupants should abandon the vehicle.
- ▶ Stop at the marshaling point(s), report in at the checkpoints, and wait for directions.

After a flood

After flood waters are gone, there could be substantial damage to a community and hazards to be aware of when you return.

Re-entry

If you are ordered to evacuate, you are not allowed to return until authorities have declared it safe to do so. You should not re-enter your property if:

- ▶ authorities have not deemed it safe to do so
- ▶ any part of the structure has collapsed
- ▶ the structure is off its foundation
- ▶ the main power switch was not turned off prior to flooding

Clean up

It is important to clean and dry your property after a flood as soon as possible to prevent further damage and reduce risks to your health.

- ▶ Maintain good hygiene during flood clean-up by:
 - ▶ reducing contact with floodwater or anything that may have been in contact with it
 - ▶ wearing protective clothing like rubber boots, safety glasses and hard hats
 - ▶ never using water that may be contaminated

- ▶ washing your hands often
- ▶ Keep children and pets away from contaminated areas during clean up.
- ▶ Dry carpets within the first two days. Replace carpets if they are deeply saturated or damaged.
- ▶ Clean all interior wall and floor cavities with a solution of water and unscented detergent.
- ▶ Move damp items to a cool, dry area as soon as possible. Set up fans to minimize mould growth.
- ▶ Thoroughly wash and disinfect all undamaged food, medicine and supplies. Dispose of all food, medicine, cosmetics and toiletries that made contact with flood water.

Mould

Mould spores are often invisible, and can cause long-term illness. Symptoms include persistent headaches, sudden nosebleeds or colds. Mould is identifiable by signs of brown, grey or black growth on surfaces. Not all mould damage is visible.

- ▶ Wear a dust mask and disposable gloves.
- ▶ Dispose of all insulation material, particleboard, furniture, mattresses, box springs, stuffed toys, pillows, padding, cushions and furniture coverings that show signs of mould.
- ▶ Freeze important textiles and documents until you have time to treat them.

Plastic and hardwood items may be saved. Let wet mould dry, then brush it off outdoors and disinfect. Washable items can also be saved. Disinfect by lightly misting each item with a cleaner, such as rubbing alcohol or chlorine bleach, using use one part cleaner to four parts water.

Water usage

- ▶ Check local water advisories. Do not use water from the local supply unless it is declared safe by authorities.
- ▶ Do not drink water if it shows signs of contamination, such as colour, odour or taste.
- ▶ Standing water should be drained slowly and in stages. Use pumps or pails to remove, then a wet/dry shop vacuum to clean up the rest.
- ▶ Contact your local or provincial health authority for instructions on how to disinfect and restore wells and cisterns.

Heating and appliances

- ▶ Do not heat your property to more than 4°C/40°F until after all the water is gone.
- ▶ Do not use any appliances or electrical systems, or touch electric panels, until all components have been thoroughly cleaned, dried and inspected by a qualified electrician.
- ▶ Buy and install a carbon monoxide alarm if you plan to use pumps or heaters powered by gasoline, kerosene or propane during clean-up.
- ▶ Clean or replace soaked or damaged parts, such as filters, ducts and electrical components in the furnace and hot water tank.

*Information contained in this tip sheet has been modified from the **Government of Alberta**.*

Contact Leduc County Fire Services

Phone: 780-955-7099

Fax: 780-955-9401

fireservices@leduc-county.com

leduc-county.com/emergency-preparedness