

## How Can I Stay Safe in a Flood?

The following common sense guidelines can help you avoid the dangers of flooding. When a flood occurs, **think about your safety first**. If you come upon a flooded street, take an alternate route! Keep these points in mind:

- **Do not walk through flowing water.** Currents can be deceptive. Six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- **Do not drive through standing water on roads or in parking lots.**
  - Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control, stalling, or even damaging the engine.
  - 12 inches of moving water can sweep the average auto off the road.
  - Roads covered by water are prone to collapse.
- **Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Turn off the power at the service box to your home if it is about to be flooded.
- **Keep children & pets away** from flood waters, ditches, culverts and storm drains and detention basins.
  - Flood waters can carry fecal bacteria as well as loose materials that can cut or hurt you.
  - Moving water through culverts & storm sewers can suck smaller people and pets into them.
- **Be alert for gas leaks.** Turn off the gas to your home before it floods. If you smell gas, alert the gas company. Do not use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.
- **Do not use gas generators or charcoal fires indoors.** Breathing carbon monoxide exhaust can be deadly.
- **Look out for wild animals.** Small animals that have been flooded out of their home may seek shelter in yours.
- **Clean everything that has been wet.** Flood water will be contaminated with sewage and other chemicals which pose severe health hazards.

## How Can I Protect My Home?

If your property is susceptible to flooding, there are many flood damage reduction measures you may wish to consider. Watertight seals applied to brick and block walls to help protect against low-level flooding.

- Elevate water heaters, furnaces, air conditioners and other major appliances to higher floors or on raised platforms.
- Raise the entire home above flood levels. Most wood frame houses can be elevated, allowing flood waters to flow under the house without damaging it.
- If the sanitary sewer backs up into the basement during heavy rains, a plug or standpipe can stop this if water does not get more than one or two feet deep and if there are no toilets on the lowest level. The most effective solution for sewer backup flooding is installation of an overhead sewer connection.
- Temporary measures such as moving furniture and other valuables to higher floors or blocking exterior openings with sandbags, or sandbag alternative products, may also help.

Some of these require building permits, so check first with our Community Development Department.