

Floods: Do's and Don'ts

What to do before a flood

To prepare for a flood, you should:

- Avoid building in flood prone areas unless you elevate and reinforce your home.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Install "Check Valves" in sewer traps to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Contact community officials to find out if they are planning to construct barriers (levees, beams and floodwalls) to stop floodwater from entering the homes in your area.
- Seal the walls in your basement with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.

If a flood is likely to hit your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should:

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

Floods: Pointers

A) Before Floods

Ignore rumours, Stay calm, Don't panic

Stay available - Keep your mobile phones charged for emergency communication; use SMS

Be alert - Listen to radio, watch TV, read newspapers for weather updates

Don't ignore animals - Keep cattle/animals untied to ensure their safety

Survival is key - Prepare an emergency kit with essential items for safety and survival

Save your valuables - Keep your documents and valuables in water-proof bags

B) During Floods

Don't take risk - Don't enter flood waters. In case you need to, wear suitable footwear

Watch your step - Stay away from sewerage lines, gutters, drains, culverts, etc.

Don't get electrocuted - Stay away from electric poles and fallen power lines to avoid electrocution

Remain healthy - Eat freshly cooked or dry food. Keep your food covered

Evade illness - Drink boiled/chlorinated water

Ensure cleanliness - Use disinfectants to keep your surroundings clean

C) After Floods

Protect children - Do not allow children to play in or near flood waters

- Don't use any damaged electrical goods, get them checked

Watch your step - Watch out for broken electric poles and wires, sharp objects and debris

See what you eat - Do not eat food that has been in flood waters

Mosquitoes can kill - Use mosquito nets to prevent malaria

Use clean water - Don't use the toilet or tap water if the water lines/sewage pipes are damaged

D) If you need to evacuate

- Raise furniture, appliances on beds and tables
- Put sandbags in the toilet bowl and cover all drain holes to prevent sewage back flow
- Turn off power and gas connection
- Move to a higher ground/ safe shelter
- Take the emergency kit, first aid box and valuables with you
- Do not enter deep, unknown waters; use a stick to check water depth
- Come back home only when officials ask you to do so

Urban Flooding: Do's and Don'ts

Before floods

1. Do not litter waste, plastic bags, plastic bottles in drains
2. Try to be at home if high tide and heavy rains occur simultaneously
3. Listen to weather forecast at All India Radio, Doordarshan. Also, messages by Municipal bodies from time to time and act accordingly.
4. Evacuate low lying areas and shift to safer places.
5. Make sure that each person has lantern, torch, some edibles, drinking water, dry clothes and necessary documents while evacuating or shifting.
6. Make sure that each family member has identity card.
7. Put all valuables at a higher place in the house.

In the Flood Situation

1. Obey orders by government and shift to a safer place.
2. Be at safe place and they try to collect correct information.
3. Switch of electrical supply and don't touch open wires.
4. Don't get carried away by rumors and don not spread rumors.

DO's

1. Switch off electrical and gas appliances, and turn off services off at the mains.
2. Carry your emergency kit and let your friends and family know where you are going.
3. Avoid contact with flood water it may be contaminated with sewage,oil,chemicals or other substances.
4. If you have to walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that you do not step into deep water, open manholes or ditches.
5. Stay away from power lines electrical current can travel through water, Report power lines that are down to the power company.
6. Look before you step-after a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, which may include broken bottles, sharp objects, nails etc.Floors and stairs covered with mud and debris can be slippery.
7. Listen to the radio or television for updates and information.

8. If the ceiling is wet shut off electricity. Place a bucket underneath the spot and poke a small hole into the ceiling to relieve the pressure.
9. Use buckets, clean towels and mops to remove as much of the water from the afflicted rooms as possible.
10. Place sheets of aluminium foil between furniture wet carpet.

Don't's

1. Don't walk through flowing water - currents can be deceptive, and shallow, fast moving water can knock you off your feet.
2. Don't swim through fast flowing water - you may get swept away or struck by an object in the water.
3. Don't drive through a flooded area - You may not be able to see abrupt drop - offs and only half a meter of flood water can carry a car away. Driving through flood water can also cause additional damage to nearby property.
4. Don't eat any food that has come into contact with flood water.
5. Don't reconnect your power supply until a qualified engineer has checked it. Be alert for gas leaks - do not smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames.
6. Don't scrub or brush mud and other deposits from materials, This may cause further damage.
7. Never turn on ceiling fixtures if ceiling is wet. Stay away from ceilings those are sagging.
8. Never use TVs, VCRS, CRT terminals or other electrical equipment while standing on wet floors, especially concrete.
9. Don't attempt to remove standing water using your vacuum cleaner.
10. Don't remove standing water in a basement too fast. If the pressure is relieved too quickly it may put undue stress on the walls.

Urban Flooding: Pointers

A) Before Floods

Keep drains clean - Do not litter waste, plastic bags, plastic bottles in drains

Remain safe inside - Try to be at home if high tide and heavy rains occur simultaneously

Be informed/be alert - Listen to radio, watch TV or read newspapers for weather updates and flood warnings

Survival is key - Prepare an emergency kit with essential items for safety and survival
- Keep your documents and valuables in water-proof bags

B) During Floods

Do's

Ensure safety - Turn off power and gas connection; be alert for gas leaks

Respond quickly - Evacuate low lying areas and move to safer places

Evade illness - Drink boiled/chlorinated water

Watch your step - Stay away from sewerage lines, gutters, sharp objects and debris

Don't get electrocuted - Stay away from electric poles and fallen power lines to avoid electrocution

Don'ts

- Don't walk/swim through flowing water

- Don't drive through flooded areas

- Don't eat food that has come into contact with flood water

- Don't use any damaged electrical goods

- Don't use electrical equipment while standing on wet floors, especially concrete