

## Flood Preparedness

Flooding is the leading cause of public emergency in Ontario, and the most costly. It can happen at any time of the year. Heavy rains, snow melt, spring runoff, ice jams, wind-related storm surges, or the failure of dams or flood control channels can cause flooding. We are experiencing more extreme weather events (heavy rain and snow, violent thunderstorms, etc.) than ever before. It is important that we take steps to prepare.

Conservation Authorities monitor stream flow, rainfall and snow packs in watersheds in order to forecast and issue advance warnings. This allows municipalities to prepare and put in place plans for a response to emergency situations created by flooding.

The Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority issues four levels of messages:

**Normal:** no flood conditions

**Watershed Conditions Statement:** notice of weather conditions that could pose a risk to personal safety or have the potential to lead to flooding.

There are two variations of these:

*Water Safety Statement* - high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous, flooding is not expected

*Flood Outlook Statement* - potential for flooding based on weather forecasts or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

**Flood Watch:** Flooding is possible in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities, emergency services and individual landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.

**Flood Warning:** Flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. This may include a call for specific action to be taken by flood coordinators and/or emergency services, e.g. closing road and bridges, activation the emergency response plan, warning residents in specific areas or, in some cases, evacuation.

Roles & responsibilities are shared among all levels of government to limit the impact of floods. Individuals also play an important role. Everyone has a responsibility to protect their homes and their families.

### For more information:

Emergency Management Coordinator  
City of Sault Ste. Marie  
Tel: 705-541-5173

[www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca](http://www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca)  
[www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com)  
[www.ssmrca.ca](http://www.ssmrca.ca)

Emergency Management Ontario  
[www.ontario.ca/beprepared](http://www.ontario.ca/beprepared)

Public Safety Canada  
[www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca)

Follow us at:

 @CitySSM or @AlgomaHealth



# FLOODS HAPPEN are you ready?



## Before a flood

### To help reduce the chance of flood damage

- Windows and doors at ground level should be weather protected and in good working order.
- Eavestroughs and downspouts should be installed to move water away from your home.
- The ground around your home should slope away from the foundation wall to help drain water away.
- Have a 72-hour emergency kit on hand. For information on making a 72-hour emergency kit visit [www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca)



- Be ready to follow instructions from emergency response officials.
- If you live in an area that has a high flood risk, consider hiring a professional to raise the furnace, water heater and electric panel off the ground.
- Do not store important papers or items in the basement.

### If you know flooding is coming

- Shut off the electricity at the panel or fuse box, **ONLY** if the area around the main power box is dry.
- Move toxic or hazardous materials away from the flood area to avoid pollution.
- Turn off basement furnaces and the outside gas valve.
- Pay attention to internet, radio and television messages with important information about where to go and what to do.

## During a flood

### Be prepared

- Keep your 72-hour emergency kit close at hand in a portable container in case you are asked to leave your home.
- Call 911 if you have a life-threatening emergency
- Be aware the flash flooding can occur. If a flash flood occurs, move to higher ground right away.

### If you need to evacuate

- Leave your home when asked to do so by emergency officials. Ignoring a warning could endanger your family or those who might have to come to your rescue.
- Take your 72-hour emergency kit with you.
- Follow the routes specified by officials. Don't take shortcuts they could lead to blocked or dangerous areas.
- Time permitting leave a note telling others when you left and how to get in touch with you.
- Make arrangements for pets.



### Never cross a flooded area

- Never cross a flooded area on foot or in a car. The water may be deeper and moving faster than it looks.
- Avoid crossing bridges if the water is high and flowing quickly.
- If you are caught in fast-rising water and your car stalls, leave it and save yourself and passengers.

## After a flood

### Do's & Dont's

- Do not go home until you have been told that it is safe to do so.
- Use extreme caution when returning to your home after a flood.
- Make sure the building is safe to enter. Buckled walls or floors are a sign of danger.
- Appliances that have been in contact with flood water can pose a risk of shock or fire when turned on.
- Do not go into a flooded basement until the PUC has shut off power to your home.
- Flood water can be contaminated with sewage and other hazardous materials. Wear protective clothing, boots, gloves and masks to minimize contact.



- Call your insurance company immediately to report damages.
- Algoma Public Health recommends calling a professional cleaning company to clean-up after a flood.
- If you choose to do the cleaning yourself, please follow "A Guide for Cleaning Up After Flood or Sewer Back-up" which is available online at [www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com)
- If you get your water from a well and have had flooding on your property the water may be contaminated. Do not drink the water until it has been tested to be safe.
- Avoid pumping your septic tank immediately after a flood, an empty septic tank can become buoyant and possibly leak or spill.
- Make sure to listen to all public service announcements after a flood to ensure your and your family's health and safety.