

Preparing For a Flood

What Are the Basic Steps to Prepare For the Storm?

- Call the County flood control office (568-3440) to find out if your home is located in a flood-prone area or landslide-prone area. These areas may change after a fire or due to other conditions.
- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters. See the Emergency page of the County website at www.countyofsb.org.
- Plan and practice a flood evacuation route with your family. Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be the "family contact" in case your family is separated during a flood. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.
- Make wallet cards for each member of the family with emergency contact information and phone numbers. Send a copy to the out-of-state contact.
- Post emergency phone numbers at every phone.
- Call 211 in advance for information about moving people with special needs, (e.g., elderly or bedridden people, people with disabilities). Call 911 for assistance during an emergency.
- Identify potential home hazards and know how to secure or protect them before the flood strikes. Be prepared to turn off electrical power when there is standing water or fallen power lines. Turn off gas and water supplies before you evacuate.

What Can I Do if I'm Under a Flood Watch or Warning?

- Gather emergency supplies (see below) and stay tuned to local radio or television station for updates. Channel 20 is the government information channel for Santa Barbara County.
- Have your immunization records handy or be aware of your last tetanus shot, in case you should receive a puncture wound or a wound becomes contaminated during or after the flood.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles with clean water. Sanitize sinks and tubs first using a solution of 1 cup of bleach in 5 gallons of water. Rinse and fill with clean water.
- Toilet tank water may be used for washing if it does not contain cleaning or deodorizing chemicals. Pool water may be used to flush toilets when water service is unavailable.
- Bring outdoor possessions, such as lawn furniture, grills and trash cans inside or tie them down securely.

What Emergency Supplies Will I Need?

You should stock your home with supplies that may be needed during the emergency period. At a minimum, these supplies should include:

- Several clean containers for water, large enough for a 3-5 day supply of water (about five gallons for each person).
- A 3-5 day supply of non-perishable food and a non-electric can opener.
- A 3-5 day supply of animal food and water, if applicable.
- A first aid kit and manual, prescription medicines, and supplies for any special medical needs.

- A battery-powered or hand crank radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.
- Sleeping bags or extra blankets.
- Water-purifying supplies, such as chlorine or iodine tablets or unscented, ordinary household chlorine bleach.
- Baby food and/or prepared formula, diapers, and other baby supplies if needed.
- Disposable cleaning cloths, such as "baby wipes" for the whole family to use in case bathing facilities are not available.
- Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, etc.
- An emergency kit for your car with food, flares, booster cables, maps, tools, a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, sleeping bags, change of clothes and shoes, etc.
- Cell phone
- Cash in small bills
- Supplies such as shovels, tarps, rope, duct tape, hammer, nails, and rain gear
- Rubber boots, sturdy shoes, and waterproof gloves.

How Can I Prepare to Evacuate?

Expect the need to evacuate and prepare for it. When a flood watch is issued, you should:

- Fill your vehicle's gas tank and make sure the emergency kit for your car is ready. Open the garage door, pack the car with essential items you will need if evacuated, and position your vehicle for easy exit.
- If no vehicle is available, make arrangements with friends or family for transportation.
- Fill your clean water containers.
- Review your emergency plans and supplies, checking to see if any items are missing.
- Tune in the radio or television for weather updates and evacuation routes.
- Move livestock and family pets to a safe area. Due to food and sanitation requirements, emergency shelters may not accept animals.
- Adjust the thermostat on refrigerators and freezers to the coolest possible temperature.

What if I'm Ordered to Evacuate?

People are advised to comply with evacuation orders. Authorities will direct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, or within the greatest potential path of the rising waters. If a flood warning is issued for your area or you are directed by authorities to evacuate the area:

- Take only essential items with you.
- If you have time, turn off the gas, electricity, and water.
- Unplug appliances to prevent electrical shock when power is restored.
- Follow the designated evacuation routes and expect heavy traffic.
- Do not attempt to drive or walk across creeks or flooded roads or bridges.
- Don't drive in water deeper than the bottom of your vehicle.

For More Information

For more information stay tuned to local emergency radio and TV stations, check the County website (www.countyofsb.org), or call 568-3440.

