

# FLOOD SAFETY TIPS

## TERMS TO KNOW

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### **Flood or Flash Flood Watch**

Indicates that flooding or flash flooding will occur within a few hours of heavy rainfall, a dam or levee failure, or water being released from an ice jam.

### **Flood or Flash Flood Warning**

Inundation of a normally dry area near a stream or other watercourse, or unusually severe ponding of water has been reported or is imminent.

## **BE PREPARED!**

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- Learn the safest route from your home or business to high, safe ground should you have to leave in a hurry.
- Develop and practice a “family escape” plan and identify a meeting place if family members become separated.
- Make an itemized list of all valuables including furnishings, clothing, and other personal property. Keep the list in a safe place.
- Plan what to do with your pets.
- Keep your automobile fueled. If electric power is cut off, gasoline stations may not be able to pump fuel for several days. Have a small emergency supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Find out how many feet your property is above and below possible flood levels. When predicted flood levels are broadcast, you can determine if you may be flooded.
- Have adequate emergency supplies on hand.

## **EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT**

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- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First Aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and water
- Non-electric can opener
- Essential medicines (at least one week supply)
- Checkbook, cash, credit cards, ATM cards
- Sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber for emergency waterproofing.



Eliot L. Spitzer  
*Governor*

John R. Gibb  
*Director*

## BEFORE THE FLOOD

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- Monitor the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Weather Radio or your local radio and TV station broadcasts for information.
- If local officials advise evacuation, do so promptly.
- If directed to a specific location, go there.
- Know where shelters are located.
- If there is time, move essential items and furniture to the upper floors of the house. Disconnect electrical appliances that cannot be moved. Do not touch them if you are wet or standing in water.
- If you are told to shut off water, gas, or electrical services before leaving your home, do so.
- Secure your home: lock all doors and windows.

## TRAVEL WITH CARE

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- Leave early to avoid being marooned on flooded roads. Follow recommended routes. Do not sightsee.
- As you travel, monitor local radio broadcasts for the latest information.
- Watch for washed-out roads, earthslides, broken water or sewer mains, loose or downed electrical wires, and falling or fallen objects.
- Watch for areas where rivers or streams may suddenly rise and flood, such as highway dips, bridges, and low areas.
- Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road. Turn around and go another way. Water moving at two miles per hour can sweep cars off a road or bridge.
- If you are in your car and water begins to rise rapidly around you, abandon the vehicle immediately.

## AFTER THE FLOOD

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- Listen to the radio or TV for instructions from local officials.
- Wait until an area has been declared safe before entering it. Be careful driving, since roads may be damaged and power lines may be down.
- Before entering a building, check for structural damage. Turn off any outside gas lines at the meter or tank. Let the building air out to remove foul odors or escaping gas. Upon entering the building, use a battery-powered flashlight. Do not use an open flame as a source of light—gas may be trapped inside.
- When inspecting the building, wear rubber boots and gloves. Watch for electrical shorts and live wires before making certain the main power switch is off.
- Do not turn on electrical appliances until an electrician has checked the system and appliances.
- Throw out any medicine or food that has had contact with floodwaters. Test drinking water for potability. Wells should be pumped out and water tested for drinking.
- If the public water system is declared “unsafe” by health officials, water for drinking and cooking should be boiled vigorously for 10 minutes.

**For additional tips on how to be prepared  
for all hazards, visit SEMO on the web at**

**[www.semo.state.ny.us](http://www.semo.state.ny.us)**