

Flood Preparation, Planning and Mitigation

Central Texas, including the City of Austin, is located in the heart of Flash Flood Alley and faces the constant risk of dangerous floods. Adequate preparation, planning, and mitigation is essential to minimize the potential loss of life, property damage, and infrastructure disruptions caused by flooding. This guide provides information and resources to help you prepare for what to do before, during and after flooding.

Prepare

Prepare for flooding in your community by taking the following steps:

- **Understand Your Flood Risk:** Visit the City of Austin's [FloodPro](#) mapping tool or [FEMA's Flood Map Service Center](#) to learn if your property is in a floodplain.
- **Receive Alerts:** [Sign up to receive regional notifications](#) from local emergency public safety offices.
- **Monitor Water Levels:** View rainfall and creek level data from the LCRA's online [water gauge tool](#).
- **Document and Insure Your Property:** Contact your insurance company or agent to purchase flood insurance before any threat of flooding. Review specific steps property owners can take to document and insure your valuables before a disaster strikes using this [FEMA guide](#).
- **Protect Your Important Documents:** Keep important documents in a waterproof container and consider creating password-protected digital copies.

Plan

In the event flooding does occur, it is of the utmost importance that you and your family have an effective plan of action to evacuate safely. To ensure you can do so, take the following steps:

- **Develop an Emergency and Evacuation Plan:** Develop an evacuation plan by filling out Ready's "[Make a Plan Form](#)" which will automatically generate a PDF for you to share with your family and friends. Consider including alternative escape routes in case your primary route is flooded.
- **Learn and Practice:** Practice your evacuation plan regularly to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. When developing your plan, make sure to account for circumstances including:
 - How will you avoid flooded roads? Is there somewhere you can wait out a flood? Are there alternative evacuation routes?
 - Is there a friend or relative whom you can stay with if a flash flood watch has been issued?
 - Are there elderly, disabled, young children, or pets in your family who will need extra assistance?
- **Make an Emergency "Go-Kit":** Create a "Go-Kit" with essential items such as water, non-perishable food, first-aid kits, needed medications, flashlight, extra batteries, extra car keys, credit cards, maps, clothing, and other irreplaceable items. Learn how to make your "Go-Kit" at www.ready.gov/kit.
- **Listen to Evacuation Orders and Leave Early:** In the case of a flood or rising water levels which threaten your home or evacuation route, leave early enough to avoid hazards. Be sure to listen carefully to evacuation orders and follow the suggested guidance.
- **Avoid Flood Waters:** Do not attempt to walk or drive through flood waters and never drive around barricades. It takes only six inches of water to knock you off your feet. Turn Around, Don't Drown! View road closures at <https://www.atxfloods.com/>.
- **Stay Put and Get to High Ground:** If you are unable to evacuate in time, take your "Go-Kit" to the highest point of your property, and avoid low levels. Do not climb into a closed attic as you may become trapped by rising floodwaters. Go on the roof only if necessary and signal for help.

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Mitigate

When flooding occurs, there is no way for you to completely stop it. However, there are certain actionable steps you can take to mitigate the damage flood waters cause to your home.

- **Consider Retrofitting Your Home:** Elevate electrical surfaces and appliances, install flood-resistant door and windows, install check-valves to prevent flood water backup in drains, and seal foundation cracks. Consult a professional on guidance for retrofitting strategies, and review FEMA's "[Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting](#)."
- **Protect your Home:** Move valued items to higher levels. Bring outdoor possessions, like lawn furniture and grills, inside or tie them down securely. If you have access to sandbags or other materials, use them to protect your home from flood waters if you have sufficient time to do so.
- **Turn off Utilities:** Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation appears necessary. Turning off utilities during a flood reduces the risk of hazards and protects against damage to electrical systems and appliances.

What to do After a Flood

In the case that flood waters damage your home, or even if they did not, it is important to remain vigilant once flooding subsides.

- **Stay Informed:** Stay updated on road conditions through local news sources. Boil water if advised by authorities after a flood and use utility company apps for service updates. Review generator safety to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Avoid Flood Waters:** Even if flooding has subsided, still continue to avoid flood waters.
- **Take Safety Measures:** Avoid visiting disaster areas to not hinder emergency operations. Heed road closure and cautionary signs for your safety. Wait for the "All Clear" before entering flood-damaged buildings, and contact insurance and power companies for assistance. Inform family and loved ones of your safety via the American Red Cross's [Safe and Well listing](#).
- **My House Flooded. What do I do?**
 - Call your homeowner's insurance company and follow their instructions to file a claim and repair your home.
 - Consider calling Call 3-1-1. The City of Austin's Watershed Protection Department can send someone to document the flooding.
 - Follow [this guide](#) from FEMA on repairing your flooded home.

Additional Resources

- FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program [website](#) contains useful information on all things flood-related.
- The National Weather Services [Flood Safety Tips and Resources website](#) has important information on what to do before, during, and after a flood.
- View the City of Austin's [webpage](#) on preparing for a flood for more information on flood preparation, safety, and warning, along with frequently asked questions.
- The National Association of REALTORS® in conjunction with FEMA developed a [Toolkit for flood preparedness](#) with important flood-related publications, trainings, online resources, and videos.