

01 / BEFORE THE EVENT

Floods

Move away from water. Keep electricity out of it.

Flood routes, electrical hazards, contaminated wells and the checks that matter before a basement floods.

ACT FIRST Move to higher ground when threatened by rising water and follow evacuation orders. Never walk or drive through floodwater. If trapped by moving water, reach the highest possible point and call emergency services. [1]

Choose routes that avoid low ground

Find local flood and evacuation information for your address. Identify a destination and an alternative route. Write down who will help household members or pets; do not assume your usual underpass will remain passable. [2]

Protect equipment before water arrives

Discuss flood protection for appliances, electrical panels and heating equipment with qualified professionals. Raising heavy or connected equipment can require permits and electrical or plumbing work. Plan this ahead of the storm. [3]

Make water and communication independent

Keep drinking water, medicines, documents and a radio accessible with your emergency kit. If your household uses a private well, record the health authority and well-contractor contacts before a flood contaminates the supply. [2]

U.S. and Canadian sources. Apply current local instructions wherever you live. This guide is not a live alert service or an official agency publication.

02 / DURING AND AFTER

When conditions change

DURING THE EVENT

Turn around at a flooded road

Do not bypass barricades or follow another vehicle through water. Depth, current and the road beneath may be impossible to judge. Take the official evacuation route rather than a familiar shortcut. [1, 2]

Stay out of a wet electrical area

Do not enter a basement with submerged outlets or cords. Do not wade to a breaker panel to switch off power. Leave the area and contact emergency services or the utility for a safe response. [1, 2]

AFTER THE IMMEDIATE THREAT

Get the electrical assessment first

Wait until authorities permit return. If power was not isolated before flooding, get a qualified electrician to establish whether entry is safe. Flooded appliances can cause shock or fire when switched on; do not test them by plugging them in. [2]

Treat the well as potentially contaminated

Do not restart a flooded well pump or drink well water simply because it looks clear. Ask a qualified well contractor and the local health authority about inspection, disinfection and testing. [2]

03 / DETAILS WORTH KNOWING

Small details. Better decisions.

Shallow-looking water can move people and cars

NWS says around 6 inches (15 cm) of moving water can knock a person down and 12 inches (30 cm) can float a car or small SUV. These are danger examples, not safe crossing thresholds. [1]

A dry-looking appliance may still be unsafe

After a flood, turning on an appliance can create electrical or fire risk. A visual check is not an electrical clearance. Keep affected equipment out of service pending professional advice. [2]

Where backup power fits

Check any sump-pump backup before bad weather using the manufacturer or installer procedure. Confirm starting demand, expected operating hours and alarm behavior. A pump or battery does not make floodwater safe to enter. Keep portable power equipment in a dry, suitable location and leave it behind if retrieving it would delay escape.

Try this before you need it

Trace your normal drive on a map and mark low crossings. Choose an alternative using local official routes. Add the utility and well contacts to a paper copy so a flat phone does not remove the plan.

Local context: Canada

Canadian provincial, territorial and municipal authorities set evacuation routes and local water advice. Follow their instructions for wells, boil-water notices and re-entry. U.S. water-depth examples do not replace any local road closure.

04 / YOUR HOUSEHOLD ACTION CARD

Write it down. Keep it handy.

Complete this page before an emergency. Review when your household, equipment or local instructions change.

Flood information / local evacuation route

Higher-ground destination / backup route

Utility / qualified electrical contact

Well contractor / health authority (if used)

Transport, accessibility and pet arrangements

READY CHECK

- ☐ Routes checked for low crossings
- ☐ Documents and kit accessible
- ☐ Equipment flood-protection reviewed early
- ☐ Electrical and well contacts recorded
- ☐ Everyone knows to avoid floodwater

SOURCES / Numbers refer to the actions in this guide

1. [NOAA / NWS - During a flood](#)
2. [Public Safety Canada - Floods: prepare, respond and recover](#)
3. [Public Safety Canada - Elevate or move appliances before a flood](#)

Original summaries and planning prompts by StillPower Guide, operated by Mihai Florea. Sources checked October 24, 2026. No agency endorsement. The linked sources provide fuller guidance.