

Flooding is one of Iowa's most common hazards. Here are some tips on what to do before, during, and after a flood.

Before a Flood

- Plan for evacuation including where you are going to go and the route you will follow.
- Listen to your local radio or television stations and your NOAA Weather Radio for reports of flood danger.

During a Flood

- Do not try to walk or drive through flooded areas. Water can be deeper than it appears and water levels rise quickly. If your car stalls in floodwater, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from moving water; moving water six inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Cars are easily swept away in just two feet of water.
- Stay away from disaster areas unless authorities ask for volunteers.
- If your home is flooded, turn the utilities off until emergency officials tell you it is safe to turn them on. Do not pump the basement out until floodwater recedes. Avoid weakened floors, walls and rooftops.

After a Flood

- Wear gloves and boots when cleaning up.
- Open all doors and windows. Use fans if possible to air out the building.
- Wash all clothes and linens in hot water.
- Discard mattresses and stuffed furniture. They can't be adequately cleaned.
- Wash dirt and mud from walls, counters and hard surfaced floors with soap and water. Disinfect by wiping surfaces with a solution of one cup bleach per gallon of water.
- Discard all food that has come into contact with flood water. Canned food is alright, but thoroughly wash the can before opening.
- If your well is flooded, your tap water is probably unsafe. If you have public water, the health department will let you know—through radio and television—if your water is not safe to drink. Until your water is safe, use clean bottled water.
- Learn how to purify water. If you have a well, learn how to decontaminate it.

- Do not use your septic system when water is standing on the ground around it. The ground below will not absorb water from sinks or toilets. When the soil has dried, it is probably safe to again use your septic system. To be sure, contact your local health department.
- When floodwaters have receded, watch out for weakened road surfaces.

For information on flooding:

Federal Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/index.shtm>

National Weather Service

<http://www.weather.gov/floodsafety/floodsafe.shtml>

American Red Cross

http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_240_,00.html