

Don't Let Floodwaters Swamp Your Spring: 5 Things You Need to Know

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CHICAGO – Less than a year ago, flash floods caused millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses in the Midwest and Great Lakes region. Many of these areas are experiencing flooding even now. As warmer spring months approach, the threat of floods from snow melt and heavy rainfall continues to increase for these communities.

“Don't assume your family knows what to do if a disaster threatens your community. Talk through your emergency plan now so you can be sure they do,” said James K. Joseph, FEMA Region V administrator. “Your family's plan should include where to go if you need to seek shelter or move to higher ground. Build or restock your emergency supply kit, including a minimum of three days of food and water, flashlight, batteries, cash, and first aid supplies.”

Ensure your home is also protected in a disaster by taking a few simple steps now to prepare:

1. Verify your insurance coverage is adequate. Are you covered for possible damage from wind, flood and sewer back-up? Has your policy been updated to reflect the value of your home? Check out the “**Did you Know**” infographic below—how do these facts impact your home's financial protection? Contact your insurance agent to get these questions answered and ensure your home is adequately covered.

2. Buy and install sump pumps with backup power. This piece of equipment pumps water away from your home so the basement or crawlspace stays dry. Make sure your system can run on backup batteries or a generator, in case of a power outage.



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Page 1 of 2

3. Install backflow valves to keep sewage out of your home. This preventative measure can reduce the risk of floodwaters pushing sewage back up into drains and sinks, which can overflow onto your floor and damage your home.

4. Keep important papers in a safe place. Make copies of critical documents (mortgage papers, deed, passport, bank information, etc.). Keep copies in your home and store originals in a secure place outside the home, such as a bank safe deposit box. You may also consider saving copies electronically through web-based storage services, a password-protected USB or external hard drive. Do your homework to ensure the electronic option you choose keeps your personal information secure.

5. Elevate mechanicals off the floor of your basement—such as the water heater, washer, dryer and furnace—to avoid potential water damage.

To learn more about preparing for floods, how to purchase a flood insurance policy and the benefits of protecting your home or property investment against flooding visit www.FEMA.gov/national-flood-insurance-program or call 1-800-427-2419. For even more readiness information follow FEMA Region V at twitter.com/femaregion5 and facebook.com/fema. Individuals can always find valuable preparedness information at www.Ready.gov or download the free FEMA app, available for Android, Apple or Blackberry devices.

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