



Here are some safety tips to prepare for rising water—and what to do once a flood has begun.

Safety Tips

Before a Flood

- If a flood is likely in your area, listen to the radio or television for information.
- Know the difference between a **flood watch** and a **flood warning**.
A watch means flooding is possible
A warning means flooding is occurring or will occur soon

When a Flood is Imminent

- Be prepared! Pack a bag with important items in case you need to evacuate. Don't forget to include needed medications.
- If advised to evacuate your home, do so immediately.
- If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground.
- If possible, bring in outdoor furniture and move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances.

During a Flood

- Lock your house. Preplan a designated spot (and a phone number) out of the flooded area where everyone can meet if the family becomes separated.
- Do not walk or drive through flowing water. **Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths.** Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. One foot of flowing water can move a car. Always use a pole or a stick to make sure the ground is in reach before you enter an area where the water is not flowing.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. **Electrocution is the number two cause of flood deaths.** Electrical current will travel through water. Report downed power lines to Avista Utilities at (800) 227-9187 or Kootenai Electric Cooperative at (977) 744-1055.

- Turn the gas off at the main valve next to the meter. If you smell natural gas, or hear a hissing noise, chances are good there is a natural gas leak. Immediately call Avista Utilities at (800) 227-9187.
- See that your pets are taken out of harm's way. Move them to high ground with you, or take them to a friend whose home is not threatened by the flooding.

After a Flood

- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Avoid moving water.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage

Before And When You Go Back:

1. Take care of yourself and your family. A flood is tough on both the body and spirit. The effects a disaster has on you and your family may last a long time. Keep your eyes open for signs of anxiety, stress, and fatigue.
2. Always look before you step. After a flood, the ground, floor, and stairs may be slippery and are usually covered with debris, mud, broken bottles, and nails. Stream banks also can be unstable.
3. Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage.
4. Make sure that the electricity is turned off when you return home. Do not use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.
5. Carbon monoxide exhaust kills. Use a generator or gasoline-powered machines and camp stoves outdoors. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly.
6. Wash and clean everything. Floodwaters can carry chemicals and germs that could be harmful to your health. Spoiled food, flooded cosmetics, and medicines are health hazards. When in doubt, throw it away!

USEFUL LINKS:

Monitor Local River and Lake Conditions through the National Weather Service in Spokane Here:

<http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=otx>

Download A Sandbagging Instructional Brochure:

http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Portals/29/docs/emergencymanagement/NWD_Sandbag_Pamphlet.pdf

Sandbagging Instructional Video:

http://wn.com/US_Army_Corps_of_Engineers__Sandbag_Techniques#/videos