



Flooding

WHAT IT IS

Flooding is the most frequent and most costly natural hazard in the United States. Nearly 90 percent (90%) of presidential disaster declarations result from natural events in which flooding is a major component. Excess water from snowmelt, rainfall, or storm surge accumulates and overflows onto adjacent floodplains, i.e., the lowlands adjacent to rivers, lakes, and oceans that are subject to recurring floods. While many floodplain boundaries are mapped by FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), floods sometimes go beyond the mapped floodplains or change course due to natural processes (e.g., erosion, sedimentation, etc.) or human development (e.g., filling in floodplain or floodway areas, increased imperviousness within the watershed from new development, or debris blockage including cars, trailers, and propane tanks). Flooding is one of Spotsylvania County's most common hazards. Depending on its depth and velocity, flooding can be a nuisance or a disaster. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near a body of water, downstream from a dam, or in other areas known to flood in previous storms.

WHAT TO DO:

Before (Preparedness/Mitigation)

- Sign up for [SpotsyAlert](#) and have a battery or crank powered NOAA weather radio available.
- Decide early whether you will evacuate, and where you will go if ordered to or opt to leave.
- Prepare your home by cleaning gutters and drains.
- Disconnect electrical appliances.
- Know if your residence or business is in a floodplain. [Virginia Flood Risk Information System \(VFRIS\)](#) | [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#)
- Apply for flood insurance. Consider this even if you are not in the 100-year floodplain (the FEMA-designated "Special Flood Hazard Area") – many recent floods have exceeded the 100-year and even 500-year marks!
- Learn First Aid.
- Refer to "Medical Emergency," below.



During (Response)

- Listen to official information.
- If you encounter rising water, move to higher ground immediately.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- Always stay clear from floodwaters.
- Do not drive through flooded roads, even if you have a vehicle with high clearance and even if the water appears to be shallow – “turn around, don’t drown.”
- Stay away from downed power lines to avoid the risk of shock or electrocution.

After (Recovery)

- Return home when local officials say it is safe.
- Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters.
- Do not drink from floodwaters.
- Do not drink or wash with water from a flooded household well until it is tested and found to be safe to use.
- Eliminate standing water where mosquitoes may breed.
- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. “When in doubt, throw it out.”
- Remove all porous items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried. These items can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home.
- Check in with family and friends by texting or using social media.

KEY TERMS

A **Flood Watch** means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood in your area.

A **Flood Warning** means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate do so immediately.

A **Flash Flood Watch** means flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground. A Flash Flood could occur without any warning.



A **Flash Flood Warning** means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately; do not wait for instructions.

A **100-year flood** (or “base flood”) is a flood that has a **1 percent chance** of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, according to FEMA’s flood maps. A base flood may also be referred to as a 100-year storm, and the area inundated during the base flood is sometimes called the 100-year floodplain, which generally correlates to the “Special Flood Hazard Area” where federal flood insurance is required in order to obtain a mortgage. It should be noted that a “100-year flood” refers to the annual probability of such an occurrence, not the predicted interval between such floods.

A **500-year flood** is a flood that has a **0.2-percent chance** of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, according to FEMA’s flood maps. The area inundated during a 500-year flood is sometimes called the 500-year floodplain. It should be noted that a “500-year flood” refers to the annual probability of such an occurrence, not the predicted interval between such floods.

Medical Emergency

WHAT IT IS

A medical emergency is any acute injury or illness that poses an immediate risk to a person’s life or long-term health. You can’t predict accidents or illnesses, but you can prepare for a medical emergency. Medical emergencies may happen on their own, or they may be a secondary impact of virtually every other hazard. Some examples of medical emergencies are: difficulty breathing, fainting, chest pain or pressure, uncontrolled bleeding, coughing or vomiting blood, sudden severe pain, poisoning, or major injuries, such as broken bones, lacerations, burns, or puncture wounds.

WHAT TO DO

Before (Preparedness/ Mitigation)

- Know how to call or text 911.
- Keep well-stocked First Aid kits at home, at work and in your car.
- Put together a list of emergency contacts.
- Keep a list of medical conditions and medications with you at all times.
- Fill out a File of Life and put it on your refrigerator door.
- Learn the warning signs of medical emergencies.



- Participate in trainings such as CPR, First Aid, Basic Life Support (BLS), or Stop the Bleed to prepare yourself for emergencies.

During (Response)

- Stay calm, and call 911. If you are trained, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or rescue breathing, if necessary.
- If you think you are having a medical emergency, seek immediate medical care.
- Gather as much information as possible about the circumstance, and call 911. Follow all the operator's instructions carefully. Stay on the line until the operator says it's OK to hang up.
- If you have only a brief time with the operator, make sure you share your address and your medical issue first.
- Call if you can, text if you can't. It is always preferred that you call 911 since it is a better way of exchanging information.

After (Recovery)

- Review all your documentation to ensure your emergency contact and medical information are up to date.
- Educate others in your networks to better prepare your community.

KEY TERMS

CPR is short for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. CPR is an emergency procedure in which the heart and lungs are made to work by compressing the chest overlying the heart and forcing air into the lungs. It is used to maintain circulation when the heart has stopped pumping on its own. CPR courses are offered by many community organizations.

First Aid refers to a course of basic injury-treatment and life-saving skills offered by many community organizations.

An **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm and can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm.

File of Life is a form that you keep on your refrigerator door that provides emergency personnel critical medical and emergency contact information in case you are unable to provide that information to them yourself.