

## Plan, Prepare, Stay in tune and informed

### FLOOD AWARENESS

**Floods can happen any time and any place. And they can happen fast. So whether you live near the water or not, you should always be ready.**

The Truckee Meadows has seen its fair share of flooding over the years. Hopefully this will help you understand the vocabulary you could hear if a flood is possible or imminent.

A flash flood “watch” is issued when flash flooding is possible within the designated watch area—be alert.

A flash flood “warning” is issued when a flash flood has been reported or is imminent—take necessary precautions.

### BE PREPARED BEFORE A FLOOD OCCURS

Have an emergency plan, including an evacuation route.

Have a 72/96 hr. kit. Be sure to include a large flashlight, spare batteries, candles, and waterproof matches, food, water, first aid supplies, and a battery-powered radio.

Keep material on hand such as sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber.

Keep your auto fueled; if electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days. We recommend a minimum of a ½ a tank at all times.

Copy your most important documents (mortgage papers, deed, passport, bank information, RX, shot record, house/car insurance, etc.) ([See documents for an extended list](#)). Keep copies in your home and store originals in a secure place outside the home, like a bank safe deposit box.

Take photos of your most valuable possessions (furniture, musical instruments, electronic equipment.) Store copies with other documents.

Save and store receipts for any expensive household items.

Make an itemized list of other possessions, such as clothing, books, small kitchen appliances, etc. You don't have to note every item and its cost but the more comprehensive you list, the better.

### WHEN YOU RECEIVE A FLOOD WARNING

Fill large clean containers, pots, pans, sinks, and bathtubs with water. Then shut off the main valve to protect the clean water already in your water system, and close the valves on the water lines leaving the house.

Move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood water.

Keep fuel tanks/containers (propane, gasoline, etc.) filled to keep them from floating away.

If forced to leave your home, and time permits, move essential items to safe ground; grease immovable machinery to help prevent damage.

1. The water in your pipes is safe to drink IF you closed the valve on the main water line before the flood.
2. To use water still in the pipes, turn on the faucet located in the highest point in the house—usually an upstairs bathroom. This lets air into the system. Then draw water from the lowest faucet in the house.

3. Your hot water heater or water pressure tank could supply many gallons of safe water in an emergency. Before using water from the water heater, switch off the gas or electricity which heats the water. *Leaving the heating part on while the heater is empty could cause an explosion or burn out the elements.* After turning off the gas or electricity, open the drain valve at the bottom of the tank. Do not turn the water heater on again until the water system is back in normal service.

### **BE SAFE DURING A FLOOD**

When a flood warning is issued, heed official instructions.

When the National Weather Service issues a flood watch, monitor potential flood hazards on [www.noaa.gov/floods.php](http://www.noaa.gov/floods.php).

Don't walk through a flooded area. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.

Don't drive through a flooded area. Just two feet of water can lift and move a car, even an SUV. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else during a flood.

Be especially cautious at night when it is harder to recognize the dangers of flash floods.

Keep away from downed power lines and any other electrical wires—electrocution is often a major cause of death in floods.

Watch out for animals that have lost their homes during a flood. Animals may seek shelter in your home and aggressively defend themselves.

### **AFTER THE FLOOD**

Unless you are absolutely certain your home supply is not contaminated by flood water, PURIFY ALL WATER before using it for drinking, food preparation, brushing teeth or dishwashing. If the water contains sediment or floating material, strain it through a cloth or coffee filter before treating it. Water can be purified by boiling or by chemical treatment. [Click here to read about water purification.](#)

Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with flood waters.

Do not handle live electrical equipment in wet areas; electrical equipment should be checked and dried before being returned to service.

Use flashlights, not open flames, to examine buildings as flammables may be inside.

Report broken utility lines. Stay tuned to radio (AM 780 for Reno area) or local TV stations (2- 4- 8) for follow-up information.

Do not visit disaster areas; your presence might hamper rescue and other operations.

DO NOT CALL 9-1-1 for sandbag information. Call: Reno-Direct (775) 328-2180

Sparks-Sparks Emergency Operations Center (775) 353-1508

Websites: [www.floodawareness.com](http://www.floodawareness.com) [www.disasterhelp.gov](http://www.disasterhelp.gov)