

## Flash Flooding Safety Tips

If you live near a stream, in a low lying area, or even in an urban area, you could be affected by flash flooding.



During heavy rain, stream levels can rise rapidly and overflow banks, roadside ditches can overflow, low lying areas can quickly fill up, and storm water sewers can back up because there is just too much water for drains to handle.

In winter, the threat of flooding is not gone. A winter warm up with even a moderate rain event can cause rapid snow melt resulting in flooding. Ice jams can quickly back up water in streams and rivers causing flooding.

- Never walk or drive through standing or running water. Even six inches of water can knock a person off their feet. Just two feet of water can float a car. Drowning is the number one cause of death in floods.
- Do not drive around barricades. Remember roads, culverts and bridges can be undercut making them unsafe for travel.
- Stay away from downed power lines. Electrocutation is the second most common reason for death in a flood. Electricity travels readily through water.
- Have the local utility turn off gas and electricity to your home. Don't have service restored until all appliances and systems have been inspected and cleaned by a qualified person.
- Remember that some appliances, such as televisions, can hold a charge even after being unplugged.
- Be alert for gas leaks. Don't smoke, use candles or lanterns, and do not light an open flame unless you're certain natural gas is not present.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide hazards, an odorless, colorless gas that can cause asphyxiation. Carbon monoxide is formed when fossil fuels are burned, including kerosene, propane and charcoal. Do not use gas or charcoal grills indoors for heating or cooking, and crack windows when using alternative heating sources to allow fresh air into your home and carbon monoxide to escape.
- Be ready to evacuate when told to do so. Pack medications, baby supplies, food and water, and any other needed speciality items to take with you.
- Remember that unless otherwise specified, shelters do not allow pets to be brought inside. Make arrangements for the care of pets in advance of an emergency.
- Follow the designated emergency routes during an evacuation. Other routes may be for emergency traffic only, or could be congested, flooded or damaged.

# Remember

For more information on emergency planning, and local hazards, visit the following websites:

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| <a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>           | <a href="http://www.ready.gov">www.ready.gov</a>         |
| <a href="http://www.fema.gov">www.fema.gov</a>                   | <a href="http://www.highwater.org">www.highwater.org</a> |
| <a href="http://www.chemungcounty.com">www.chemungcounty.com</a> | <a href="http://floodsmart.org">floodsmart.org</a>       |
| <a href="http://www.schuylercounty.us">www.schuylercounty.us</a> |  |
| <a href="http://www.steubencony.org">www.steubencony.org</a>     |  |

- Phone Numbers:
- Chemung County Emergency Management:  
607-737-2096
- Chemung County Planning Dept.  
607-737-5510
- Schulyer County Emergency Management:  
607-535-8200
- Schuyler County Planning Dept.  
607-535-7162
- Steuben County Emergency Management:  
607-664-2700
- Steuben County Planning Dept.  
607-664-2268
- DEC Flood Control, Horseheads:  
607-739-0809

**Report all illegal flood plain development or dumping to your local code enforcement officer or municipal government office.**

Your Municipal Code Enforcement Officer:

Obtain all building permits, when required, from this office

Your Town, Village or City Hall:

- Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation:  
739-2009
- Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation:  
535-9650
- Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation:  
776-7398

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## FLOODING AND EMERGENCIES...

### THE FACTS

If you live in or near a 100 Year Floodplain, you have a 25% chance of being flooded once every 30 years. Flooding from small streams, roadside ditches, ponds, and lakes have caused widespread damage to homes and properties in our tri-county area. In the last 150 years, rivers and streams have inundated various communities from Hornell to Wellsburg on an average of once every 4 1/2 years. Find out your flood hazard by looking at Flood Maps (FIRMs) at local government offices. Call your jurisdiction to find out where. ALL development in a floodplain, not just building construction, requires local permits. It is a violation to dump debris, including yard wastes, into a creek, stream or river and it should always be reported to your municipality. A building in the floodplain that sustains substantial damage or is substantially improved must be brought into compliance with current standards.

The floodplain provides a green space for protection of streams from development and the forces of erosion. Never ride bicycles, ATVs or motorcycles on flood control dikes as the grass that is ruined actually helps to hold the dike together in high water events. Area wetlands can help improve water quality by filtering out impurities and nutrients from runoff. Homeowner Insurance policies do not cover damage to your home from flooding. Residents in Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler Counties can obtain Flood Insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) cover flood damages to your home and its contents. Without Flood Insurance, many residents have lost their homes and belongings due to flooding, and have never recovered financially.

Insurance through NFIP can also be purchased by renters to insure their personal belongings.

There's a 30 day waiting period for coverage to begin. Find out about NFIP today, don't wait until the next flood to find out your home is not covered. Many municipalities in our tri-county area participate in the Community Rating System which can lower the price of flood insurance for the residents, making it even more affordable!

# NOW YOU KNOW...

Residents of Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler Counties are fortunate to have the Flood Warning Service (FWS) working for them. Environmental Emergency Services, Inc. (EES) is a non-profit organization, funded by the three Counties and the municipalities of the tri-county area. FWS is one of the funded projects of EES.

Storm information gathered by precipitation and river gauges, the National Weather Service, and local observers are plotted on maps and entered into computer programs by volunteers of the FWS. Flooding predictions and forecasts are then relayed to the Emergency Management Offices for the three counties. Emergency Management officials are then able to give warnings through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), evacuate residents if necessary, and take precautionary steps to save lives and limit property damage. Vehicles with PA systems may also be used to alert neighborhoods of an emergency.

As a resident in or near a flood hazard area, it is important for you to heed all warnings, follow the directions given in emergency messages, and make sure you have a battery powered radio or NOAA Weather Radio to receive warnings as they are issued. NOAA Weather Radios can be purchased in a wide variety of local electronics stores, home improvement centers, and department stores. It's one of the best investments you can make in your family's safety!

For more media information and to volunteer with FWS, please check out our website at: [www.highwater.org](http://www.highwater.org)

Our Local EAS Radio and TV Stations are:  
WENY-FM, WKPQ-FM, WNKI-FM, WFLR-AM/FM,  
WENY-TV, WETM-TV

You can help to protect your home from flood damage several ways:

- Raise your appliances and utilities above the flood level. Standpipes and pumps can also be installed to help prevent water from damaging your home.
- You can raise your entire house above the flood level.
- If flooding is not deep, you may be able to improve drainage to keep water away from your home.
- Install a water-tight seal to keep floodwater out of your well.
- Waterproof your walls and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method should be used on homes with basements or if water will not get over two feet deep.
- Emergency measures include sandbagging and moving furniture before water enters your home. Remember that sewers and drainage structures can also back up and be a cause of flooding.

**Your local government offices can help with these and other retrofitting ideas, please call!**