FLOODING

WHAT IT IS

Flooding is one of Fairfax 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 Fairfax Alerts 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.
- ❑ 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.

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.

Fairfax County Flood Information:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/flood-information

Flood Zone and Flood Insurance Rate Map
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/dfirm

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.

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.