Your Property is In or Near a Floodplain

For information on floodplain locations, visit or call:

1. FEMA’s Flood Map Service Center at https://msc.fema.gov.
2. Fairfax County’s Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/dfirm.
3. Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division at 703-324-5500, TTY 711.

Residents are encouraged to prepare for storms and flooding:

1. Sign up to receive emergency alerts at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts.
2. Plan for your family and pets.
3. Make copies of important documents.
4. Prepare an emergency kit.
5. Don’t drive through flood water.

Turn Around - Don’t Drown

To report storm drainage concerns or flooding, contact:

1. Fairfax County Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division at 703-877-2800, TTY 711.
3. Review your homeowner’s insurance policy and/or contact your insurance agent to determine if your policy covers losses from flooding.
4. For information on flood insurance visit https://www.floodsmart.gov.
Build Responsibly: Floodplain Development and Permit Requirements

Construction in a floodplain is not allowed under most circumstances.

- Before building, filling or excavating in a floodplain, or near any natural or man-made watercourse, call Land Development Services at 703-324-1720, TTY 711, to determine if the proposed activity is allowed and what types of permits are required.

- Any construction or land disturbance within or adjacent to a natural or man-made watercourse may require a wetland permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- An addition to an existing building that is located in a floodplain may be allowed if the building was constructed prior to August 14, 1978, and the cost of the addition is less than 50 percent of the market value of the existing building, not including the land.

- New dwellings and additions constructed adjacent to a floodplain must be elevated 18 inches above the 100-year flood level and set back 15 feet from the edge of the floodplain.

- Existing buildings in floodplains that have been damaged by flood, fire or other casualty loss may be reconstructed.

- A dwelling damaged to the extent that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the building before it was damaged must meet the same requirements as a new building.

- In addition to county approval, no building or filling is allowed in a floodplain without an engineering analysis to ensure the project will not increase flood damage elsewhere.

For more information call Land Development Services at 703-324-1720, TTY 711, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment.

Protect Your Property from Flood Hazards

FEMA recommends several ways to protect a building from flood and wind damage:

- Re-grade the lot to drain water away from the building.

- Waterproof walls and install watertight enclosures over entrance ways. This is not recommended for houses with basements or if flood waters may exceed two feet.

- Raise the house above flood levels. Flood waters may pass under the house, causing less damage.

- Protect buildings from high winds during tropical storms and hurricanes by installing storm shutters and reinforced garage doors.

Any alteration to a building or land, including re-grading, filling or modifying a sewer line, requires a permit. For information regarding building and site regulations, call Land Development Services at 703-324-1720, TTY 711.

Some houses, including those that are not in a floodplain, may have sewers that back up into the basement occasionally during heavy rain. A plug for the basement floor drain, shower drain, or standpipes for these drains, may reduce or eliminate back ups. Plugs are available at many hardware and plumbing supply stores. A plumber should be consulted when installing a plug, overhead sewer or back-flow valves. More information about flood proofing is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/flood-info.
Protect Yourself from Flood Hazards
"Turn Around - Don’t Drown"

Flooding occurs in virtually every community, including Fairfax County. Flash floods are the most dangerous and may occur within a few minutes of excessive rainfall, a dam failure or a sudden release of water held by an ice jam. Flash floods often have a dangerous flow of water that may carry with it rocks, mud, tree limbs and other debris. Overland flooding occurs when rivers and streams overflow their banks. Occasionally, the capacity of stormdrains that are designed to carry stormwater away from streets and yards is exceeded.

For more information see the link at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/flood-info.

Driving or Walking, Save Your Life When You See Flood Waters
"Turn Around - Don’t Drown"

In 2020, 59 people drowned in floods in the United States: 31 (53 percent) were male while 28 (47 percent) were female. Of the 59 fatalities, 37 were driving; 4 were walking/hiking; 8 were at home; 1 was boating; 4 fell in; 1 was working; and 4 were other flood-related fatalities according to the National Weather Service https://www.weather.gov/arx/usflood.

Flash flooding is the most dangerous type of flood as it combines the destructive power of the water with incredible speed and unpredictability.

In 2019, 93 people died in floods. Sixty-three were male (68 percent) and 30 were female (32 percent).

The majority of people who died in floods made one common and fatal mistake: they drove their vehicles including pickup trucks, vans and sport utility vehicles, into flood waters.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, water that is one foot deep typically exerts 500 pounds of lateral force on a vehicle. Once the vehicle is floating, the floodwater becomes the steering wheel. If the water is moving, the vehicle may be swept away, tipped on its side or flipped over, trapping the occupants inside.

A bridge or road that cannot be seen under floodwaters may have been undermined or washed out.

Solving Drainage and Erosion Problems


Call NVSWCD at 703-324-1460, TTY 711, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswn/drainageproblem/ or email conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Stormdrains Service Request Information

To report storm drainage system flooding, issues with a stormwater management pond or for a determination of who maintains a stormdrain, call the Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division at 703-877-2800, TTY 711, or use the form at https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/contact-msmd-form.

For more information, visit https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/storm-drainage-system.
Your Property is In or Near a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines SFHAs as land areas that are at high risk for flooding. These areas are indicated on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and on Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs). To determine if a property is in a SFHA, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/dfirm or FEMA’s Map Service Center https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home. FEMA initiated an update of the county’s 2010 FIRM and associated Flood Insurance Study (FIS) in 2016, and on April 30, 2021, provided the county with a preliminary FIRM and FIS with updated information. The County notified all residents affected by the proposed changes to the FIRM in October/November 2021, and held a series of virtual meetings in January and February, 2022 to publicize the changes and receive comments on the proposed changes. FEMA initiated the appeal period for the preliminary FIRM and FIS on April 22, 2022. The County is currently compiling all valid appeals and anticipates submitting these appeals by July 15, 2022.

Know Your Flood Hazard

Flooding may occur at any time, with little or no warning. There are four main sources of local flood hazards: floodplains; rivers and streams during heavy storms; inadequate overland relief during heavy storms; and tidal surcharges in the lower Potomac River caused by hurricanes, tropical storms and earthquakes.

Properties in a floodplain or in a SFHA may flood at any time. Areas of flood hazards are identified on the 2010 DFIRMs.

In general, the SFHAs are labeled as Zone A or Zone AE.

Zone A is the area subject to inundation by the one-percent-annual-chance flood (also known as the base flood) event generally determined by using approximate methodologies.

Zone AE is the area subject to inundation by the one-percent-annual-chance flood event determined by detailed methodologies. Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) are shown on the FIRMs.

More information about Zones A and AE may be seen at www.fema.gov/flood-zones.

Insure Your Property for Your Flood Risk

- Learn your flood hazard.
- Some residents may qualify for a lower cost, preferred risk policy (PRP).
- Those who rent or lease property may purchase a ‘contents only’ policy.

Consider Making an Emergency Kit to Include

| Important documents and contact information | Change of clothes |
| Food and water | Cash |
| Battery operated radio | Tools and duct tape |
| Batteries, flashlight, solar chargers for cell phones | Can opener |
| First aid kit, medications | Whistle and light sticks |
| Local maps | Trash bags and sanitation supplies |
| Emergency blankets | Waterproof container |
The Fairfax County Emergency Alert System
Be Prepared - Receive Emergency Alerts

New users may register their wireless devices and land lines with voice mail (home or business) at:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts.

Please update your information at the link above.

The Fairfax Alerts system is specific to Fairfax County. Everyone who lives or works in the county is welcome to sign up for Fairfax Alerts to receive information about public safety, traffic, weather, police, emergency preparedness drills and exercises, flooding, Metro Safe Track, county news, Fairfax Connector, public meetings and events and other information from Fairfax County. The Fairfax Alerts system provides timely emergency information during a crisis and provides daily updates. Messages are delivered to registered devices that may include email accounts, text pagers, cell and satellite phones and other wireless devices. Register for emergency alerts from Fairfax County at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts.

Residents may:
• Choose weather, traffic and public safety notices.
• Use the “do not disturb” feature.
• Customize alerts relevant to home, school, day care and work.
• Choose up to ten delivery methods.
• Manage alerts by downloading the iPhone or Android app.

Please register with Fairfax Alerts at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)
Short messages are sent during critical situations to cell phones in a geo-targeted area. There is no need to sign up or download an app.

• Imminent threats to safety or life, sent by state and local officials.
• Extreme weather: tornados, flash floods, hurricanes or wind warnings issued by the National Weather Service.
• Amber alerts: serious child abduction cases issued by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the state police.
• Presidential alerts during a national emergency.

Community Emergency Response Guide (CERG)

The Fairfax County CERG is a guide that provides residents with the tools needed to be better prepared. The guide includes:
• a family emergency plan.
• a business or organization emergency plan.
• a neighborhood preparedness plan.
• an emergency supply kit check list.

Specifically for flood prone areas in Huntington, Belle View and New Alexandria:
Sign up for Riverwatch Alerts at Fairfax Alerts. Select the Fairfax County Riverwatch option under subscriptions and click on Flood Preparedness Alerts; choose Huntington, Belle View, or New Alexandria.
Protect the Drainage System and Natural Floodplain Function

Please help improve water quality by recycling trash and keeping storm drains clear. Anything that is thrown from a vehicle, dropped on a parking lot or deposited into a storm drain is carried by rain or melting snow through the storm drainage system to streams, rivers and lakes; not to a wastewater treatment plant. This includes swimming pool water. Please do not drain pool water into a stream, manhole or storm drain. For more information about draining swimming pools, call 703-324-5500, TTY 711.

Litter blocks storm drains, which may cause street and yard flooding, traffic delays and property damage. Cigarette butts, plastic and glass bottles, food containers, cans, plastic shopping bags and anything else that is not disposed of properly may flow to and pollute the Potomac River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. Trash is unsightly. It degrades residential and commercial property values, harms the fish and other wildlife, and damages wetlands.

Please Do Not Litter

It is illegal to deposit anything into a storm drain. Fertilizer, pesticides, motor oil, pet waste, paint and paint-related products are hazardous to the environment and pollute the Potomac River, a source of drinking water for many Fairfax County residents.

The Fairfax County Municipal Code, chapters 124-1-1 through 124-1-13, contains provisions that address illicit discharges to state waters and the county’s storm drainage system. Call 9-1-1 to report hazardous materials, such as those listed above, that have been discarded into a storm drain or stream.

Flood Protection Information Available at Fairfax County Libraries

Printed information about flood protection for people, their property and their personal possessions is available at Fairfax County public libraries, in the reference section. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

Topics include:

- Elevating Residential Structures.
- Protecting Floodplain Resources.
- Reducing Damage from Localized Flooding.
- Protecting Building Utilities from Flood Damage.
- Above the Flood: Elevating Your Flood Prone House.
- Protecting Manufactured Homes from Floods and Other Hazards.
- Answers to Questions About the National Flood Insurance Program.
Elevation Certificates Helpful Information

Many residents received a “Letter D” from FEMA which states that “your property was built before your community’s first flood maps were issued, but now there’s a flood map (Flood Insurance Rate Map) that shows you are at high risk for flooding. This means your current flood insurance rate will be increasing to reflect this high risk. Understanding your Elevation Certificate (EC) options will be important.”

Why is my discounted flood insurance rate increasing?
The Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 requires gradual, yearly increases to premiums for most discounted policies so they reflect the true flood risk of the building. Approximately 80 percent of National Flood Insurance Program policyholders paid a true risk rate in 2014 and are minimally impacted by the law. With limited exceptions, flood insurance rates cannot increase more than 18 percent annually.

If I don’t have a copy of my Elevation Certificate. What county office should I call?
Call the Stormwater Planning Division at 703-324-5500, TTY 711, or Land Development Services at 703-324-1720, TTY 711, for information about the elevation certificates the county may have on file.

If I do not have an Elevation Certificate (EC) how do I get one and about how much does it cost?
Elevation Certificates can be prepared by any Virginia licensed land surveyor and may cost $800 to $2000.

If I purchase an EC what rate will I pay?
When you obtain an Elevation Certificate, you pay the amount that reflects your property’s true flood risk or the discounted rate, whichever amount is less, as long as your policy does not meet the lapsed policy criteria.

If I sell my property, can the new owner also pay a lower, discounted rate?
Yes, if your flood insurance policy is continuous and you do not let your policy meet the lapsed policy criteria.

Will an Elevation Certificate be beneficial if I sell my property?
Yes, an Elevation Certificate may be helpful because the buyers will know the property’s true flood risk so they can have a better idea of how much they may be charged for flood insurance in the future. Remember, they can continue getting the discounted rate if it’s lower than the true flood risk rate, as long as the policy does not meet the lapsed policy criteria.

Call 1-888-379-9531
www.FloodSmart.gov

Acquiring Flood Insurance is Recommended

Fairfax County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) sponsored by FEMA.

Participation in the CRS is a service for county residents and provides an opportunity for property owners to purchase flood insurance for their buildings and contents at discounted rates.

Residents in Fairfax County may qualify for a Preferred Risk Policy (PRP).

A PRP offers multiple coverage combinations for buildings and contents, or contents-only coverage for renters, who are located in moderate to low risk areas.

PRPs are available for residential and commercial buildings located in these areas that meet eligibility requirements based on the flood loss history of the building.

Flood insurance is mandatory for properties located in a SFHA that are financed with federally-backed mortgages. This includes all loans from banking institutions with deposits guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Fairfax County maintains a Class 6 CRS Rating which results in flood insurance premium discounts for county residents in a SFHA, who save on average $254 per policy, per year.

Participation in the CRS program saves county residents $473,423 annually in flood insurance premiums.

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Virginia. Repairs are expensive. One inch of water in a home or office may cause significant damage.

Most homeowners’ insurance policies do not cover losses from flooding.

Property owners and residents are encouraged to contact their insurance agent to determine the extent of their policy coverage.

Flooding may occur at any time of the year. After applying for flood insurance, typically there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage begins.

Renters may buy flood insurance for personal belongings or business inventory. Coverage may include cleanup expenses and repair or replacement of such items as furnaces, water heaters, washers, dryers, air conditioners and freezers.

Flood insurance benefits do not have to be repaid. Flood-related claims may be covered even if a disaster was not declared. Flood insurance may cover homes and businesses and protect the property owner’s financial security.

Call 1-888-379-9531
www.FloodSmart.gov
Floodplain Management Regulations and Substantial Improvement Requirements

Land use and development in Fairfax County is governed by the Comprehensive Plan, the Public Facilities Manual, the County Code and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Fairfax County reviews all subdivision, site and grading plans and building permit applications to determine if the land is located in a floodplain.

The goal of floodplain-related requirements is to prevent loss of life and property damage, promote flood safety, preserve wildlife habitats and maintain the natural integrity of streams, protect water quality and increase groundwater recharge.

The county participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). NFIP rules state that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, additions or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50 percent of its market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building.

If a residence in a floodplain is damaged to the extent that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the building (exclusive of the land) before it was damaged, the building must be constructed 18 inches above the base flood elevation.

It is important to note that an approved Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) does not revise the FEMA or county floodplains.

Thank You!