

# Guide for Families

# April:

# Flooding

## Staying Safe When Waters Rise

You don't need to live or work near the water to be affected by flooding. Flood damage can be caused by water main breaks, storms, or even sewer backups.

A flash flood is sudden flooding that is the effect of rapidly rising floodwaters. Flash floods usually occur with no warning within several hours of intense rainfall from slow moving thunderstorms. Flash floods are the number one weather-related killer in the U.S., with nearly 80% of flash flood fatalities involving cars.

With the city's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, we can also be affected by coastal flooding, which involves water flowing from the ocean into coastal areas.

These are the different flood watches and warnings issued by the National Weather Service:

- **Flood Watch:** An overflow of water is possible for your area.
- **Flash Flood Watch:** Flash flooding is possible in or close to the watch area. Flash Flood Watches can be put into effect for as long as 12 hours as heavy rains move across an area.
- **Flood Warning:** Flooding has already occurred in the warning area.
- **Flash Flood Warning:** Flash flooding has already occurred in the warning area. A Flash Flood Warning can also be issued as a result of substantial rainfall, a dam failure, or thawing snow.

### What to Do If Flooding Occurs

- If you're caught indoors, move to a higher floor. If possible, take warm clothing, a flashlight, and a portable radio with you. Do not try to swim to safety.
- If you're outdoors, don't walk or drive through flooded areas. Just six inches of moving water can knock you over; one to two feet of water can sweep away a vehicle.
- If your car stalls, abandon it as soon as possible. Floodwater can rise rapidly and sweep away your car with you inside.
- Before entering a building in the affected area, check for structural damage. Do not turn on any lights or electrical appliances until an electrician has verified that they are safe to use.

Let's get ready and stay safe when flood waters hit!



Department of Education  
Office of Emergency Management



### Quick activities to try at home:

- As a family, discuss the safest route from your home to high ground in case of flooding. Walk the route together.
- Update critical information, including your Emergency Reference Card, which includes your family's important contact information. Make sure your Go Bags are complete and accessible.



### To Learn More:

NYC Office of Emergency Management, [www.NYC.gov/oem](http://www.NYC.gov/oem)

OEM Flood brochure, [http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/downloads/pdf/flooding\\_guide.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/downloads/pdf/flooding_guide.pdf)

OEM Flood resources, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/flooding.shtml>

OEM on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/NYC-emergencymanagement](http://www.facebook.com/NYC-emergencymanagement)

OEM on Twitter, @nycoem

Notify NYC, Register for emergency notifications by visiting [NYC.gov/notifynyc](http://NYC.gov/notifynyc), calling 311, or following @NotifyNYC on Twitter

FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program, [Floodsmart.gov](http://Floodsmart.gov)