



Preparing for Flooding

A Guide for Residents

With lake levels nearing a record high, there are increased risks and lower thresholds for flooding in the Essex Region. There are a number of shoreline and low-lying areas in the region that are vulnerable to flooding. Storm events of 2018 have further compromised the sustainability of some areas of the shoreline and the interior properties that it protects.

While there are limits to what can be done to prevent flooding in this area, there are steps that property owners can take to manage the risks that floods pose to people and properties.

Municipalities, Emergency Services and the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) work together to warn residents about floods and to help keep people safe when flooding occurs. Floods can occur at any time of year. The impacted areas are not only at risk from extreme rainfall events, but are also vulnerable to high winds and wave action causing erosion.



Flood Forecasting

ERCA monitors weather information, river flows, lake levels, wind and ice conditions and other factors to predict when floods may occur, and how high the water or wave swells may rise. When flooding is possible, ERCA issues flood messages to municipal emergency management officials, the media, and the public. There are three types of Flood Messages:



1. **Watershed Conditions Statement**

This message provides early notice of flooding potential based on weather forecasts.



2. **Flood Watch**

Flooding is possible in specific areas. Municipalities, municipal services, and landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.



3. **Flood Warning**

Flooding is occurring or about to occur. Municipalities should take action to deal with the flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

Flood Status indicator on essexregionconservation.ca

Flood Response

When ERCA issues a flood message, it is sent to local emergency responders including the police, and the affected municipality's Flood Coordinator. Information is also posted on our website at essexregionconservation.ca, social media channels, and shared with all media partners. Municipalities then implement their flood response plans. ERCA provides support to the municipality in this effort.



- The Municipal Flood Coordinator will work with municipal staff to close roads, shut down utilities and take other action to protect lives and property.
- The police will warn households and businesses in the affected area.
- ERCA staff remains in contact with Flood Coordinators, and monitors conditions on the ground and any changes in conditions expected and adjusts flood status accordingly.



In a serious emergency, your Mayor may declare a state of emergency to manage the flood response.



Dealing With Flooding

Flooding can be a serious threat, but there are steps you can take to protect your property and family:

PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

- Be aware of your location in relation to the flood warning areas.
- Learn more about your municipality's emergency plan for evacuations and emergency shelters.
- Plan and practice a flood evacuation with your family.
- Pack an evacuation kit that can be accessed easily and carried quickly in case of evacuation.
- Install a sump pump with a backwater valve and test it regularly.
- Consider having a portable pump and generator available.
- Move important items to higher levels of your home.
- Consult your electricity and fuel supplier for instructions on how to safely shut down and protect furnaces and other equipment, and the steps that need to be taken to safely restart it.
- Consult your insurer about steps you should take if your property is flooded.
- Pump your septic tank regularly (every 3–5 years) to prevent harmful flooding impacts.



IF FLOODING IS IMMINENT OR OCCURRING

- Follow the instructions of emergency response officials such as police, fire and municipal staff.
- Remove valuable items from the basement/lower levels of your home.
- Make sure your sump pump is working.
- Follow instructions from utilities suppliers to safely shut down and protect furnaces and other appliances.
- Do not walk through fast moving water. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Prepare to evacuate if necessary. Collect necessary items such as medication, important papers and identification. Consider evacuating before the streets in your neighbourhood are flooded. Emergency vehicles may not be able to get to your homes.
- If you do voluntarily evacuate, you should contact your local municipal flood coordinator. This ensures that there is a record that you and your family are safe. If you live in a flood-prone area, contact your municipal office prior to an emergency to confirm your Flood Coordinator's name and contact information. In many cases, a representative of the fire department is appointed.
- If a road has been closed, obey the signs and take alternate routes. It is an offence to drive on a closed road and could void your insurance.



WHERE TO GET INFORMATION?

Prior to an emergency situation, please contact your local municipality to confirm the most appropriate personnel to speak to for advice and direction. You can note it here for reference:

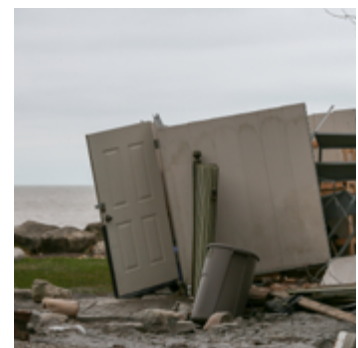
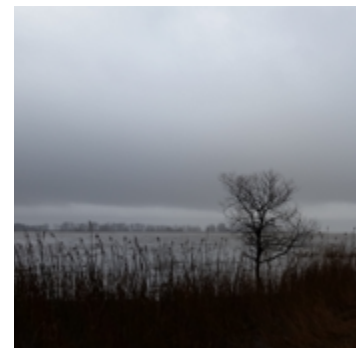
Flood Coordinator Name: _____

Phone: _____-_____-_____

- Accuweather, the Weather Network and others can provide up-to-date weather information.
- Local radio stations provide regular information on flood advisory messages.
- ERCA's website and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter) provide regular updates on Flood Advisory status.

AFTER A FLOOD

- If your water is from a well, get your well checked and water tested.
- Use flashlights to enter dark places. Do not use lanterns or candles which could ignite combustibles.
- Do not attempt to operate any electrical appliance until the wiring in your home or building has been inspected.
- Do not consume any food or medication that has come into contact with flood water.



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