

Flood Safety

Did you know that floods are the most common hazard in the United States? It was just three short years ago that Woodinville made national news with flood waters gushing through one of our major intersections. Within minutes, water rose to six feet deep under the railroad trestle and many of the first floor apartments on NE 171st Street were flooded in nine inches of water. While the City has fixed the storm drain problem that caused the 2007 flooding, and continues to work hard to expand the culverts and keep the storm drains clear of debris, the fact is that a flood can occur at any time. And, it will again here in Woodinville. Educating yourself and your family of what to do before, during and after a flood is extremely important.

Discuss the dangers of a flood with your family before one occurs. Everyone should know that flood waters can rise quickly and that even a few inches of moving water could be too dangerous to walk through. Your family should have an evacuation and communication plan that is reviewed every few months. Never enter a flooded area. The water could be electrified or there could be hidden dangers (like a missing manhole cover) that could kill you. Driving through a flooded area is also dangerous, as swift water can quickly sweep you and your vehicle (even SUVs), away.

If water begins to rise in your neighborhood or home then move valuables and essentials to upper floors or higher shelves. Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves. Do NOT touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water. If the flooding is potentially bad enough, local authorities may evacuate the area. If this is the case, follow the instructions given and proceed with caution out of the area to higher ground. Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe to do so.

After the flood, use extreme caution when reentering the building as the foundation may be damaged. Do not turn on the utilities. The local utility company will do that when it is safe. Clean up and disinfect anything that got wet since the flood waters may have contained chemicals and sewage. For more information on how to prepare for a flood, visit <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/index.shtm> .