

# Disaster Preparedness

Disaster can strike without warning, forcing you to go days without basic necessities or to evacuate your home. Relief workers will be on scene following a disaster, but may not be able to reach you immediately.

Flooding is a coast-to-coast threat, but is extremely dangerous here in southwest Pennsylvania. Rivers



weave their way in and around many of the area's towns and boroughs, and though they add an element of beauty, they also

create a potential hazard. Seasonal snowfall coupled with rains and general melting, create an opportunity for local locks and dams to become overwhelmed and rivers to overflow.

Being prepared to sustain your family's wellbeing and business' continuity for 72 hours, can greatly reduce the danger and distress you may face during an emergency. This brochure will help you and your family or business understand the dangers of flooding, and how to persevere during a flooding emergency as well as recover afterward.

Please use the resources that these websites offer to prepare yourself for possible flooding, as well as contact your local emergency management agency with any questions concerning flood mitigation.

[www.publicsafety.pittsburghpa.gov](http://www.publicsafety.pittsburghpa.gov)

Website for all City of Pittsburgh Updates

[www.fema.gov/hazard](http://www.fema.gov/hazard)

Federal Emergency Management's Guide for dealing with hazards

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Learn how to prepare your family's emergency kit

<http://www.pittsburghcoalitionforsecurity.org/>

Pittsburgh's Regional Business Coalition website

<http://www.trcpa.org/>

Three Rivers Contingency Agency website



Pittsburgh Flood of 1936

**City of Pittsburgh Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security**

Pittsburgh Emergency Management can also be found on Facebook and Twitter  
[Pittsburghemergencymanagement@city.pittsburgh.pa.us](mailto:Pittsburghemergencymanagement@city.pittsburgh.pa.us)  
412.255.2633

**City of Pittsburgh Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security**

## Preparing Your Home and Business for a Flood



**Luke Ravenstahl**  
**Mayor**

## Terms to Know

Understanding the different types of flood notifications is the first way to prepare for a disaster. Knowing the terms will help you identify a flood oriented hazard, and make timely decisions concerning your home and business.

### **Flood Watch (rivers) :**

Flooding is possible. Tune in to National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio online, commercial radio, or television for information.

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

### **Flash Flood Watch (streams and creeks):**

Flash flooding is possible. Be prepared to move to higher ground; listen to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.



### **Flood Warning:**

Flooding is occurring or will occur soon; if advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

### **Flash Flood Warning:**

A flash flood is occurring; seek higher ground by foot immediately.

### **Use Caution...**

Just 6 inches of water can sweep you off of your feet if you're attempting to cross a flooding area.

Only 2 feet of water is needed to float and flip a vehicle as large as a truck or van. **Sixty-six percent of flood related deaths occur as a result of individuals attempting to navigate through flood waters.**

Flooded roads and bridges are quickly eroded by water, and are no longer safe to travel on. Use utmost caution when making decisions to relocate your family or employees.

## Prepare Your Home



### **Anticipate Problems:**

- Move valuable items out of basements to prevent loss of property
- Elevate furnaces, water heaters, and electric panels to higher floors if susceptible to flooding
- Protect your utilities from water, and how to turn them off when they're compromised
- Store important documents in a water proof box or safe-deposit box
- Subscribe to Pittsburgh alert services at <http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/publicsafety/>

### **Plan:**

- Have an out-of-town contact who can communicate among separated family members who all members know
- Know emergency plans for your community as well as your children's' schools, and places of employment
- **Keep your pets in mind**, if you have to evacuate take them with you, or plan to have them taken care of at your local animal shelter- **412.255.2036**

### **Create an All-Emergencies Kit:**

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and extra batteries, as well as a cell phone with charger
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- A first aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust masks to help filter contaminated air
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Local maps and copies of important personal documents

## Prepare Your Business



### **Anticipate Problems:**

- Move important objects such as computer banks, and other point-of-failure items out of basements and flood susceptible floors
- Keep copies of important business documents in a storage facility
- Coordinate with a local business continuity organization, so that mutual aid and information can be shared before a disaster; [\*The Pittsburgh Regional Business Coalition for Homeland Security\*](#), and [\*Three Rivers Contingency Planning Agency\*](#) already have many continuity plans in place

### **Plan:**

- Stay in business, and have a plan for how to do so with only half of your staff
- Review your business process flow chart if one exists
- Identify operations critical to survival and recovery, and have a hardcopy source to refer to
- Include emergency payroll, expedited financial decision-making and accounting systems to track and document costs in the event of a disaster.
- Have procedures for succession of management. Include at least one person who is not at the company headquarters, if applicable
- Make a list of important contacts information, including employee emergency contacts
- Have a description or map showing locations of key property, protective materials and service shut-off points.
- Identify your suppliers, shippers, resources and other businesses you must interact with on a daily basis, create redundant systems in case your primary contractor cannot service your needs
- Detail how you will be in contact with employees, customers and others during and after a disaster

### **Create an All-Emergencies Kit:**

- Determine the items necessary to sustain quality of life for employees in case you have to shelter in place