



Dave Saville/FEMA News



Above: California Department of Water Resources
Front cover: Tim Mayhew/Pashnit.com (top); FEMA (bottom)



What to Do During a Flood Watch or Flood Warning

- Listen to the radio or TV or check the Internet to see whether a flood watch or flood warning has been posted for your area. A flood *watch* means that flooding is possible. A flood *warning* indicates that flooding is expected or is occurring.
- Check for instructions from your local emergency management agency or other local officials via the radio, TV, or Internet.
- Locate your pre-assembled emergency kit and prepare other items to take with you in the event of an evacuation.
- Move valuable items from basements and ground-floor levels to higher areas.
- Turn off electricity at your breaker or fuse box and close your main gas valve. For fuel oil or propane tanks, turn off the fuel valve at the tank. Bring outdoor possessions inside or secure them adequately.
- Place sandbags anywhere water may enter your home.
- If instructed to do so, leave immediately. Avoid areas of high or moving water and downed power lines along your evacuation route.
- If floodwaters enter your home or business before you can leave safely, move to the highest level, including the roof. It may take hours or even days before help can arrive.

For additional information about what to do during a flood, visit www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/fl_during.shtm.

What to Do if You Live in a Flood-prone Area

- Read the booklet, "So, You Live Behind a Levee!" (available at www.LivingWithLevees.org)
- Determine if you live behind a levee, find out who owns the levee near you, and do your part to promote levee safety.
- Visualize the impact if your levee is overtopped or breached and your neighborhood is flooded.
- Develop an emergency action plan to follow in case of flooding.
- Buy flood insurance.
- Take advance precautions to reduce potential flood damage.
- Support funding initiatives for levee improvement projects.

So, You Live Behind a Levee!

What you should know to protect your home and loved ones from floods



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The Truth About Levees

California Department of Water Resources

The levees built to protect people from flooding are by no means fail-proof. Some levees are in good shape but many are not. People who live behind levees are vulnerable to flooding.

Addressing the problems of inadequate levees will not be easy or inexpensive. Systematically upgrading our nation's levees will require considerable time, energy, and resources—and sustained leadership to see it through. The costs of levee repair will only increase over time, but such efforts will save lives and reduce flood damages. Acting now will cost less than acting later.

This brochure and the companion booklet (*available at www.LivingWithLevees.org*) were prepared by the American Society of Civil Engineers in cooperation with the following organizations:

- American Council of Engineering Companies
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- ASFE: The Best People on Earth
- Association of State Dam Safety Officials
- Association of State Floodplain Managers
- Dams Sector Coordinating Council
- National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies
- The Infrastructure Security Partnership
- United States Society on Dams
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency

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Flooding will happen.

All rivers, streams, and lakes will flood eventually. This means that all levees will be called upon to combat floodwaters at some point. Don't think flooding can happen to you? Think again.

Risks associated with flooding vary.

The flood risk associated with a levee depends first on the hazard or probability of a particular sized flood in a given location during a specific period of time, and second, on the potential loss of your property, your livelihood, or even the loss of your life or the lives of your loved ones as a result of flooding.

Find out more about flooding and flood risk at www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/



Four Essential Levee Facts



No levee is flood-proof.

Levees *reduce* the risk of flooding. But no levee system can *eliminate* all flood risk. A levee is generally designed to control a certain amount of floodwater. If a larger flood occurs, floodwaters will flow over the levee. Flooding also can damage levees, allowing floodwaters to flow through an opening, or breach.

For detailed information about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), see www.floodsmart.gov.

Actions taken now will save lives and property.

There are many steps you can take, from purchasing flood insurance, to developing an evacuation plan, to flood-proofing your home, to reporting any problems that you see. The sooner you act, the better off you'll be when the next flood occurs.



For information about the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, see www.fema.gov/business/nfip/crs.shtm.