

ALWAYS READY

NATURAL DISASTERS

Always Ready: Natural Disasters



Floods

According to [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov), floods are the most common natural disaster in the U.S. They can be caused by rain, snow, coastal storms, storm surges and water system overflows.

Floods can develop slowly or quickly. Flash floods can come with no warning. In addition to property damage, floods take out power, disrupt transportation, and contain contaminants that pose a health risk.

What to do before a flood

- * If you're in an area that can or has flooded, you might want to **purchase flood insurance**. Your regular insurance will not cover damage caused by a flood.
- * If your town has flooded before, it can flood again. Your community likely has an emergency plan. Learn the plan, where to get sandbags, and review your community's evacuation routes. Where is the higher ground near you?
- * Establish **warning and evacuation procedures** for the restaurant.
- * Follow your **emergency response plan** for shutting down your restaurant by starting your warning and evacuation procedures. Make plans for assisting employees who need transportation.
- * Consider **protecting your restaurant** with the following steps:
 - ◆ Fill windows, doors or other openings with water-resistant materials such as sandbags.
 - ◆ Consider purchasing or renting the following backup systems:
 - ❖ portable, gas-powered **pumps** to remove water
 - ❖ **generators** (Note: generators must be set up OUTDOORS)
 - ❖ battery-powered backup **sump pump**
 - ❖ battery-powered **emergency lighting**
 - ◆ Move **electronic and POS equipment**, sealed liquor and food supplies to a new location, or move equipment and non-perishables to higher floors or shelves if possible.
 - ◆ Turn off utilities at the main switches and valves if it's safe to do so.
 - ◆ Disconnect electrical appliances. Don't touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.



What to do during a flood

- * Watch/listen to **news** for updates. Listen for flash flood warnings and evacuation orders.
- * Be aware of your **unit's proximity to water sources**, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without the typical warnings of heavy rain and you'll want to direct people to get to safer, higher ground immediately.
- * Gather your charged phones, flashlights, batteries, emergency supply kit contents.
- * Access your **floor plan**, storm kit of key documents, contact lists.
- * If you can load up your **key office equipment** for transport (computer, server, scanner, etc.), do it.
- * If you can secure or **protect outdoor furniture** and equipment, do it.
- * **Call your vendors** and cleanup crews and get your name on the list for a refrigerated truck and for cleanup services. They'll be swamped after the flood.
- * **Do not walk through moving water**; six inches of water can knock you over. If you must walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- * **Do not drive through flooded areas.**

What to do after a flood

- * Call the **insurance company** or agent who handles your flood insurance policy right away to start your claim.
- * Before entering a building, check for **structural damage**. Don't go in if there's any chance of the building collapsing. Wait for professionals to give you the OK.
- * When you reenter the restaurant, **use a flashlight** to light your way. Do not use matches, lighters or any other open flames in case gas is trapped inside.
- * **Keep power off** until an electrician has inspected your operation for safety.
- * Be aware that standing **water could be electrically charged** from underground or downed power lines.
- * **Floodwater is often contaminated** by sewage, oil and chemicals and can make people very sick. If you're handling soaked materials, wear gloves and wash your hands frequently.
- * Until the water utility proclaims your water supply to be safe, **don't use your tap water**. Follow local boil water advisories.
- * Be careful walking around. After a flood, steps and floors are often slippery with mud and covered with debris, including nails and broken glass.
- * Take steps to reduce your risk of future floods. Make sure to follow local building regulations when rebuilding and use flood-resistant materials and techniques to protect yourself and your property from future flood damage.
- * **Mark flood levels** with tape to document the height water reached. This will help when making your insurance claim, or if you need to consider future protection of your property.
- * **Take photos/video** of the damage.