

## Protect your home

Disasters happen. There are things you can do to reduce the risk that your home will be damaged. Be sure to call your local planning office to see if your house is located in a flood plain.

### Inside your home

- ❖ Raise your washer, dryer and other equipment such as the water heater, oil tanks, furnace and electrical wiring on concrete blocks above the ground level. If you are unable to raise a particular item, consider anchoring it and protecting it with a floodwall or shield.
- ❖ Install flood shields or built-up barriers for basement windows and doors. The tops of the shields should extend above ground level.
- ❖ Have your main circuit breaker or fuse box and the utility meters raised above flood level in your area.
- ❖ Install backflow valves to prevent sewer lines from backing up.
- ❖ If your floors are below ground level, install and maintain a sump pump system.

### The home itself

- ❖ Use water-resistant building materials in areas below the base (or "expected") flood elevation.

### Outside your home

- ❖ Landscape with native plants and vegetation that resist soil erosion.



Create a family disaster safety plan. Assemble a disaster safety kit. Together, identify escape routes from your home and neighborhood. Choose an emergency meeting place for your family. Be prepared!

## Protect yourself

Floods are the most common type of natural disaster in North America. It is important that you establish a disaster safety plan to protect yourself and your family.

### If you are indoors

- ❖ Go quickly to the upper floors of your home.
- ❖ Turn on a battery-operated radio or television and listen for the latest emergency information.
- ❖ Shut off the electricity and outside gas valve.
- ❖ If told to leave, grab your preassembled disaster safety kit and go immediately to the designated shelter. Be sure to follow the recommended evacuation routes – never take shortcuts.

### If you are outdoors

- ❖ Quickly move towards an elevated area, but stay away from flood regions.
- ❖ Climb to high ground in a highly visible and safe area.
- ❖ Never cross floodwaters. Water even as shallow as 15cm could sweep you off your feet.

### If you are in a vehicle

- ❖ If you come to a flooded area, turn around and head for elevated ground and park your car there.
- ❖ Avoid remaining in your car. As little as 60 cm of water can carry a car away.
- ❖ Turn off the engine and abandon the vehicle. Many deaths have resulted from people trying to move stalled cars or being trapped inside.

Become familiar with your community's flood warning system. Every member of your family should know what to do when a flood warning or watch is released. Learn about your disaster safety plans in the workplace and at your children's school and/or childcare centre.

## Research, the foundation for action

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) is a world-class centre for multi-disciplinary disaster prevention research and education. Through research, ICLR is working to strengthen the foundation for effective action to achieve its mission to reduce the loss of life, injuries and property damage due to natural hazards.

## Building disaster research capacity

ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute founded by the Canadian insurance industry. It is affiliated with The University of Western Ontario. Institute research networks are building the capacity of the research community. ICLR staff and research associates are internationally renowned for their expertise in wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric science, risk perception, hydrology, economics, geography, health sciences and public policy.

## Many losses are preventable

Worldwide, natural disasters killed more than 650,000 people during the 1990s, and caused more than C\$1 trillion in damage. Disaster damage payments by insurance companies, governments and international aid organizations has been doubling every five to seven years since the 1950s, an alarming international trend. Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that many disaster losses are preventable.

## Community and individual safety

Nature's extreme events are remarkable forces. They can be relentless and unforgiving, but they do not need to cause disasters. Hazards deserve respect. They demand that individuals prepare, and that communities invest in resilience. Resilient communities and knowledgeable individuals can best prevent hazards from becoming disasters, but are often not doing so.



*building resilient communities*

Be prepared.  
Disasters can strike at any time.

Visit [www.ICLR.org](http://www.ICLR.org)  
and learn how to protect your family  
and home.

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Disaster prevention research saves lives

Disaster prevention research protects property

## Floods



Protect yourself  
and  
your home

[www.ICLR.org](http://www.ICLR.org)