



FLOODING: *According to the Maine Emergency Management Agency, “the most common natural hazard facing Maine is flooding.” Flooding often happens March or April as snow melts, but it can happen anytime. Here are some practical tips for dealing with flooding from the Maine Conference Disaster Resource and Response Team:*

- * Flood waters are dangerous! Just six inches of rushing water can knock an adult down and 18-24 inches of water can float cars, trucks and SUVs. Don't walk across flooded roads or drive through flooded areas.
- * If you come upon a flooded area, rather than proceeding forward, retreat. Roads can completely crumble under flood waters. You have no way of knowing what's down there. Be especially alert at night when conditions limit visibility. Follow evacuation routes and do not drive around barriers.
- * Flash flooding can topple trees, destroy bridges and contain rocks, branches and other debris.
- * Know the lingo: “flood watch” = flooding is likely; “flood warning” = flooding or it will be flooding soon.
- * Have an emergency plan. Consider a communication plan with a designated contact person and meeting place and prepare an emergency kit (“go bag”) with 3 days of food, water, medicine, flashlights, battery operated radio and first aid kit. Plan for your pets. Charge your electronics and bring your chargers. Bring cash with you, in small bills. Fill your car gas tank. If you have sandbags, fill them ahead of time.
- * If you are told to evacuate, do so. If you have time, unplug your electronics. If you're experiencing flooding get to higher ground immediately. If you're in the house and flood waters penetrate, move to the upper floors.
- * Remember that water and electricity don't mix. Avoid rooms with submerged electrical cords or outlets. If you hear cracking or popping or see sparks, stay away.
- * After the event wait for the 'all clear' to assess damage. Water can cause structural damage. There can be electrical, gas, or sewage issues. If you hear hissing or smell gas, leave the area and call the fire department.
- * Think about flood insurance now. Most standard policies don't cover it and, once obtained, there is a waiting period before it becomes active. No matter what kind of insurance you have, make sure your policy is somewhere safe outside of the flood zone in a safe deposit box or in waterproof storage.
- * Snow on the ground tends to keep air temperatures cooler and frozen ground doesn't allow rain to be absorbed. Large chunks of ice can clog waterways causing flooding elsewhere in the system. The snow cover in your yard is essentially gallons of water just waiting to break free. Add spring showers and storms, and potentially hazardous conditions can develop. Take some time now to prepare and reap the benefits later.

For expert advice on preparing for and dealing with floods, visit [Flood Preparedness | Maine Emergency Management Agency](#). For other helpful information about how you and your church can prepare for and respond to disasters and traumatic events, please visit [Disaster Ministries - Maine Conference United Church of Christ \(maineucc.org\)](#). - Rev. Estelle Margarones, Maine Conference Disaster Coordinator