

PREPARING FOR FLOODS: MANAGE STRESS AND INCREASE SAFETY



Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding in Michigan. Heavy rainstorms are becoming more common and annual precipitation (snow, rain, ice) is likely to increase.¹ Preparing for these events can help individuals, families and communities to better cope with, and recover from, flooding. Two other documents provide more information about how to stay safe *during* and *after* a flood:

- [Staying Safe During a Flood](https://bit.ly/During-Floods) (URL: bit.ly/During-Floods)
- [Staying Safe After a Flood](https://bit.ly/After-Floods) (URL: bit.ly/After-Floods)

Extreme weather events and stress

People affected by flooding often experience high levels of stress and anxiety. Stress and anxiety can last a short time or continue for months or years after a flood. Anxiety brought on by floods and other effects of climate change can lead to long-term depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and increased aggressive behavior and domestic violence.²

Preparing in advance of an extreme weather event can help to protect physical safety and reduce stress and anxiety. This document provides basic information on how to prepare for floods to give yourself, your family and your community a better sense of security.

Who is most at-risk during a flood?

Some people may be less able to cope with or bounce back from a flood. Planning how to help those who will need extra support before a flood happens can reduce anxiety and stress. People who are more at risk include:

- People over 65.
- Infants and children.
- Pregnant and postpartum people.
- People with existing health conditions or disabilities.
- Low-income individuals and families.
- People who live alone.
- People without strong social networks.
- People with mental health conditions.
- People with limited English proficiency and some immigrant groups.
- Those living in geographically isolated or under-resourced areas.

Help Others

Know how you'll help people and pets who normally rely on you.



Preparing at home

Prepare an emergency kit before a disaster happens

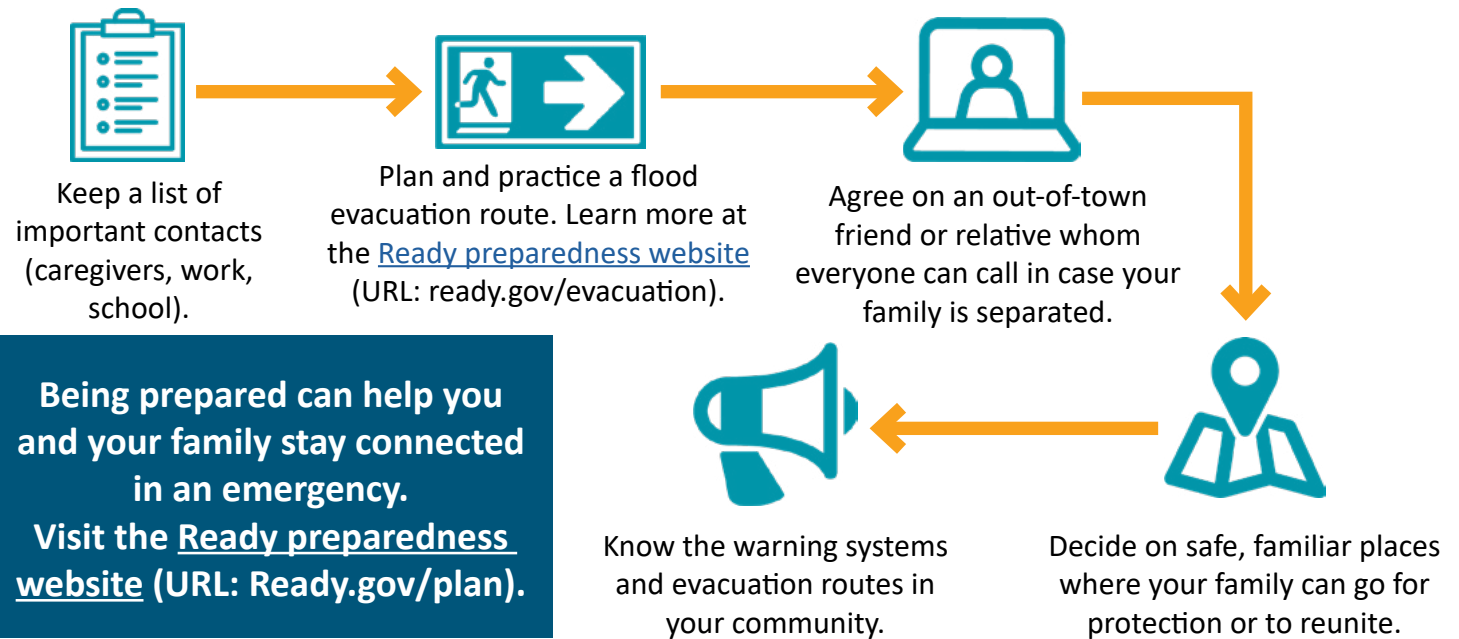
Create a kit that is tailored to your specific responsibilities and daily living needs. Water and electric service may be interrupted or water may be unsafe to drink. Store enough food, water and medicine to last at least three days.



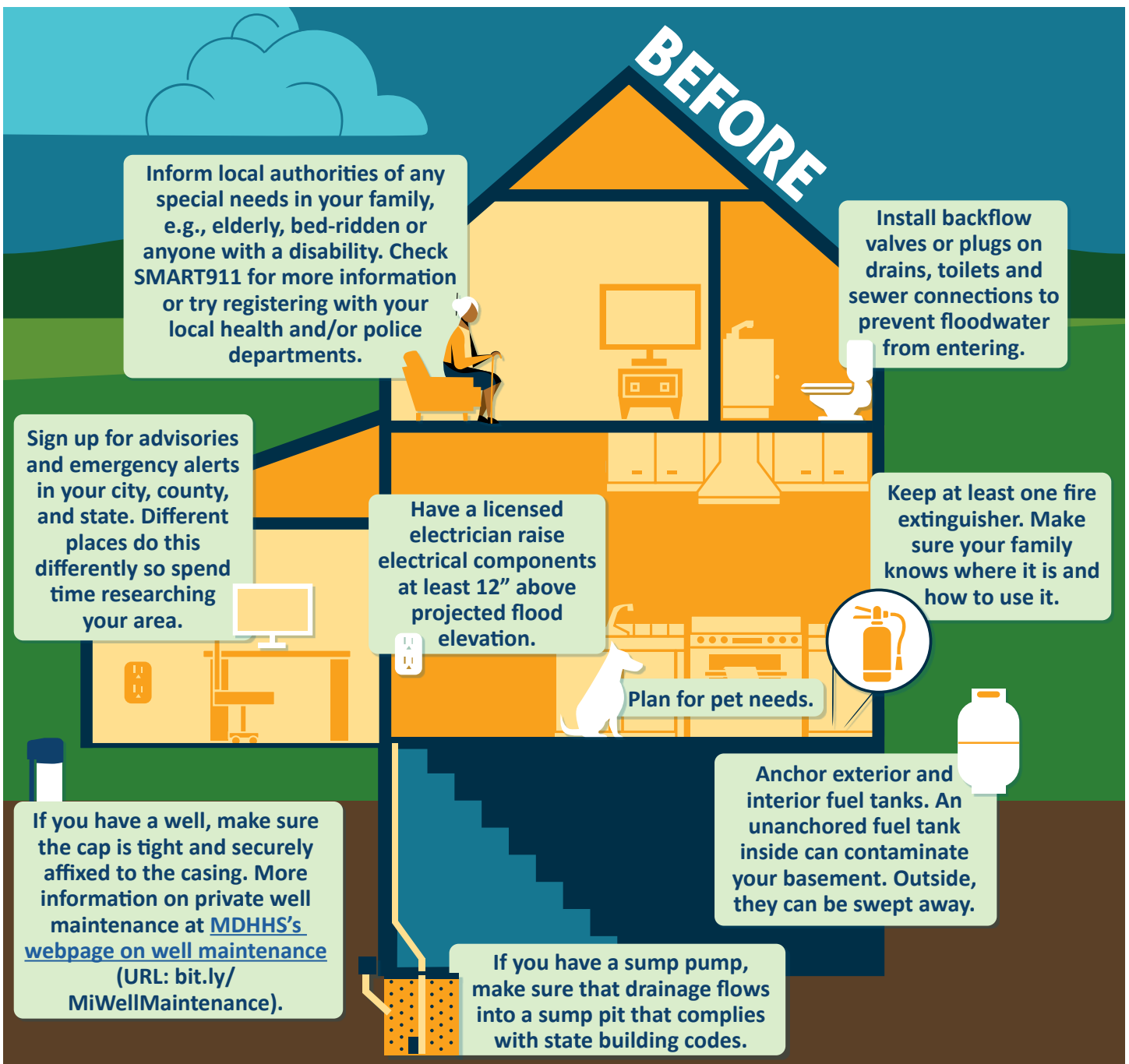
- Keep canned or packaged food in a cool dry place. Check expiration dates and replace water twice a year.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
- Review your needs and update your kit once a year.
- Prepare separate kits for home, work and your vehicle.
- For families with children that have special health care needs, visit [CDC's Emergency Kit Checklist](https://www.cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/resources/medical-kit-checklist.html) (URL: [cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/resources/medical-kit-checklist.html](https://www.cdc.gov/children-and-school-preparedness/resources/medical-kit-checklist.html)).

Make a family emergency plan

Your family may not be together when a flood occurs. Make a plan; everyone in your family should know how to contact one another and how you will reconnect.



Prepare your home



Consider getting flood insurance, especially if you live in a high-risk flood zone

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) suggests everyone should consider carrying flood insurance since floods can happen anywhere. Just one inch of floodwater can cause up to \$25,000 in damage.

Everyone lives in an area with some flood risk. Some properties are required to carry flood insurance if located in a high-risk flood zone. Property owners in moderate- to low-risk areas are eligible for lower-cost flood insurance, known as Preferred Risk Policies (PRPs).

To find out more about flood insurance, visit FEMA's page on the [National Flood Insurance Program](https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program) (URL: [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov)). You can also visit FEMA's [Flood Map Service Center](https://www.floodmapservicecenter.com) (URL: [Msc.FEMA.gov/portal/home](https://www.fema.gov/portal/home)).

Know your state, local and federal resources

[Local Weather Forecast Offices](#) (WFOs) (URL: [Weather.gov/srh/nwsoffices](https://www.weather.gov/srh/nwsoffices)) of the [National Weather Service](#) (URL: [Weather.gov](https://www.weather.gov)) issue advisories and warnings.

Stay Informed



Flood Advisory: Be Aware. Issued when flooding is expected to cause inconvenience, but not expected to be threatening to life or property. Could be minor flooding of low-lying areas and streets.

Flood Watch: Be Prepared. Issued when conditions are favorable for rapid flooding. It means it is possible that flooding will occur.

Flood Warning: Take Action! Issued when flooding is occurring or imminent.

Flash Flood Warning: Take Action! Issued when a flash flood is occurring or imminent. If you live in a flood prone area, move to higher ground. A flash flood is a sudden, violent flood and may even occur in areas not receiving rain.

Get alerts

- Learn about your community’s emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters. Visit [211-Michigan](#) (URL: [Mi211.org](https://www.mi211.org)) or call your local health department to find out more about emergency planning in your area.

Explore Michigan data

- Visit the [MiTracking Program site](#) (URL: bit.ly/MITracking) and select the “Go to the data” button for Michigan data on how precipitation is changing. For precipitation data, select the “Environment” category, “Climate Change” content area, and “Extreme Precipitation” indicator.
- Visit the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program \(MICHAP\)](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/climateandhealth](https://www.michigan.gov/climateandhealth)) to find more about how extreme weather events like flooding can impact human health.

More resources

- [Coping with Disaster](#) (URL: [Mhanational.org/coping-disaster](https://www.mhanational.org/coping-disaster)).
- [The Michigan State Police MIREADY Program](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/miready](https://www.michigan.gov/miready)).
- [Michigan Prepares: Floods](#) (URL: [Michigan.gov/michiganprepares/be-informed/floods](https://www.michigan.gov/michiganprepares/be-informed/floods))
- [Septic Systems: Hurricanes and Flooding](#) (URL: [neha.org/flooding-guidance](https://www.neha.org/flooding-guidance)).

References

1. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. (2022). *State Climate Summaries-Michigan*. Retrieved from statesummaries.ncics.org/chapter/mi/.
2. American Psychiatric Association. (n.d.). How Extreme Weather Events Affect Mental Health. Retrieved from [psychiatry.org/patients-families/climate-change-and-mental-health-connections/affects-on-mental-health](https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/climate-change-and-mental-health-connections/affects-on-mental-health).

Questions about this fact sheet? Call 800-648-6942.

Prepared by the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program \(MICHAP\)](#)

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy.

MDHHS-Pub-1546 (February 2025)