

What to do during a flood

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Drinking Water/Water Supply

If you have a pump system for your well and you need to evacuate your home, **turn the power off** to your well pump if you have time and it is safe to do so.

Don't drink the water and don't draw water from your individual private well or individual piped water source if floodwaters are present at the well or intake. The water may be contaminated. You will need to have your water tested after flooding recedes to know if it is safe to drink. You also may have to disinfect your well.

If there is a problem with the quality of your municipal drinking water supply, a boil water advisory or other drinking water advisory will be issued from community water systems. Information will be posted in the newspapers and [local news media](#) (radio & television). To find out more information on what you should do, see [How to Disinfect Drinking Water](#).

Sewage Disposal Systems

During a flood, avoid running taps and using toilets or anything which results in wastewater entering a septic tank. This can overload the system and further increase the likelihood of a sewage backup into your home. You should also shut off the power to your sewage lift pump if the system has one and it is safe to do so.

For more information on what you can do, please refer to [Sewerage Systems and Flooding](#).

Safety Precautions

- If you have to evacuate, follow the directions provided by public safety officials.
- Make sure you bring your [grab and go bags](#), including any medications and your first aid kit.
- Move animals to higher ground to ensure that they don't drown. For more information on what precautions to take to safeguard livestock and poultry, please see the [Agriculture Sector Emergency Preparedness Tips](#) fact sheet. The SPCA also has an emergency preparedness document related to [pet safety](#).
- Ensure that pesticides, chemicals (including disinfectants for water treatment) and/or other contaminants are elevated so that they don't get flushed away or dissolve in the floodwaters.

Electrical Safety

In any area where immediate flooding is anticipated, it is essential to **shut off all electrical power if safe to do so** by turning off the main service switch. If there is time, move as much electrical equipment as possible to floors to areas above the anticipated flood level. If floodwaters do enter your building, leave immediately as water and live wires can be a lethal combination. Call [BC Hydro](#) and wait for someone who is properly trained and equipped to shut off the power.

For more information on how to prepare for power outages, please visit BC Hydro's [Power Outage Safety](#) and [Floods & Electrical Safety](#) web pages, and/or the [BC Safety Authority](#) website.

Gas Safety

If you don't have enough time or a licensed heating contractor is not available:

- Turn off electrical power to each appliance and leave it off
- Shut off the gas supply valve to the appliance
- Do not drain hot water tanks. Just shut off the water supply leading to and from the tank.

If you are evacuating your premises

- Shut off your gas valve at the meter. You can turn your gas off at the main shut-off valve on the inlet pipe next to your gas meter.

For more information on gas safety for floods and for a diagram of how to shut off your gas, visit [FortisBC](#) or the [BC Safety Authority](#).

Contacts

- Drinking Water Concerns – contact the [drinking water officer](#) in your area
- Onsite Sewage Concerns – contact the local [health authority's](#) Environmental Health Office
- [Emergency Management B.C.](#) – information about disaster preparedness and recovery