

## After the flood

- Before entering your house, wait until the water has dropped below floor level.
- If you are going into an isolated area, notify the proper authorities.
- Check with electricity, gas and water authorities to determine whether supplies to your area have been interrupted and are safe for you to turn on.
- If the water sources have been flooded, assume they are contaminated.
- Do not use gas or electrical appliances until they have been checked for safety.
- Beware of damaged powerlines, bridges, buildings and trees, and do not enter floodwaters until authorities have declared the area safe.

## Warnings

### Radio

Listen to the national broadcaster (SABC) or local radio station for emergency warnings, evacuation advice, and weather updates.

### Television

Watch your local television stations (SABC) for regular weather updates and information.

### South African Weather Service

Flood warning information will be provided by the South African Weather Service, and can be obtained on <http://www.weathersa.co.za> by clicking on your region of interest.

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

**107** or **021 480 7700**  
Landline Cellular phone

- Fire Department - **021 590 1900**  
[www.capetown.gov.za/en/FireAndRescue](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/FireAndRescue)
- To report flooding, blocked drains and service disruptions, dial **0860 103 089**.
- Disaster Risk Management Centre - **080 112 HELP**  
or **080 911 HELP** (HELP = 4357)  
[www.capetown.gov.za/disaster](http://www.capetown.gov.za/disaster)  
[www.capetown.gov.za/fire](http://www.capetown.gov.za/fire)



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**FLOODS:**  
**Warning, preparedness and safety**

## What are floods?

Floods refer to excessive water run-off, or a rise in the water level in a particular area that is more than the particular environment can absorb or carry. Floods can be caused by either too much rain in a short space of time, for example cloud bursts; continuous rain in the same area; blockages in rivers and streams, such as rubble or landslides; failure of the dam walls and levies; storm surges, for instance waves being driven ashore by strong winds, or the excessive release of water from dams or lakes. Normally a prolonged period of rainfall gives us a good indication of a possible flood.

## What types of flooding do we get in Cape Town?

### 1. Urban flooding

Urban flooding is specific in that it is caused by a lack of drainage in an urban area. High-intensity rainfall can cause flooding when the city sewage system and draining canals do not have the necessary capacity to drain away the amounts of rain that are falling.

### 2. Riverine and estuarine flooding

Flooding due to rain or severe storms leading to a rising water level in rivers and estuaries.

### 3. Coastal or marine flooding

Winds generated by tropical storms and cyclones or intense offshore low-pressure systems can drive ocean water inland, and cause significant flooding.

### 4. Flash floods

Flash floods result from relatively short, intense bursts of rainfall, often from severe thunderstorms. They are a serious problem in urban areas, where drainage systems are often unable to cope.

### 5. Ponding

Ponding refers to low-lying areas with poor drainage soils, resulting in an accumulation of water that can take weeks to evaporate.

### 6. Seepage

Flooding occurs due to a high water table that results in water rising above ground level. This often occurs in the Cape Flats areas of Cape Town.

### 7. Surface run-off

Flooding caused by water running down surfaces that do not absorb water easily, or are hardened, such as tarred roads and mountain slopes.

### 8. Leaking

Flooding on in the inside of poorly constructed buildings that are not properly waterproofed.



## Flood preparedness and safety

### Before a flood

- Identify the risk in your local area.
- Prepare a home emergency plan, and identify risks around your home.
- Fix faults and remove leaves, debris and items that can cause localised flooding.
- Develop an evacuation plan that identifies routes and safe locations in which to take shelter.
- Prepare an emergency toolkit that contains the following:
  - A first aid kit
  - A torch and portable radio, with spare batteries
  - Candles and waterproof matches
  - Water for drinking and sanitation
  - Five litres of water per person for at least three days
  - Can opener and pocket knife or multi-tool
  - Important papers including emergency contact numbers
  - Rubber gloves, and waterproof bags for clothing and valuables
  - A whistle to signal for help
  - Maps of your local area
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers on display
- Exchange a complete set of copies of all your important documents, such as birth certificates, with a trusted friend or family member living at a different address.
- Whenever you backup your computer, store an extra copy at another safe location, such as work.
- Check your insurance cover on house contents and cars.



### During a flood

- Monitor current flood warnings.
- Avoid entering floodwater, unless absolutely necessary, and never underestimate the strength of floodwater, even if you are in the comfort of a vehicle.
- If advised of local evacuation:
  - listen to the radio and watch television for flood reports and instructions;
  - follow all instructions by emergency authorities and react to changing conditions;
  - turn off electricity, water and gas, and take your mobile phone along;
  - place a strong plastic bag full of sand or earth in the toilet bowl and over shower and bath outlets to prevent back-flow of sewage into your home;
  - lock your home, and take the recommended evacuation routes for your area;
  - be a good neighbour and consider taking the elderly or disabled neighbours with you; and
  - take your pets with you.