

Flooding-FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

How do I prepare my home for a flood?

- ✓ If you have access to sandbags or other materials, use them to protect your home from flood waters if you have sufficient time to do so. Filling sandbags can take more time than you may think. Sand bags are available at the County Emergency Management Office. There is no fee for the sandbags, however it is up to the individual to find sand for the sandbags. Rio Arriba County cannot provide any resources for sand.
- ✓ Have a professional install check-valves in plumbing to prevent flood waters from backing up into the drains of your home. Make sure your sump pump is working and consider having a backup. Make sure your electric circuit breakers, or fuses, are clearly marked for each area of your home.
- ✓ Since standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding, ensure coverage by contacting your insurance company or agent to purchase flood insurance. This must be done before there is even a threat of flooding as insurance companies stop issuing policies if there is a threat of flooding. (i.e. an approaching hurricane). Many flood insurance policies take at least 30 days to go into effect so even if you can buy it as a storm is approaching, it may not protect your investment.

How do I sign up for notifications?

- ✓ Go to www.rio-arriba.org and click on the CodeRed logo. Enter your information and click submit.
- ✓ You can also call the Rio Arriba County Emergency Management office at 505-747-1941 and Teresa Lopez will assist you in entering your information into the CodeRed system.

How do I assemble an emergency kit?

- ✓ It is good practice to have enough food, water and medicine on hand at all times to last you at least 3 days in the case of an emergency. Water service may be interrupted or unsafe to drink and food requiring little cooking and no refrigeration may be needed if electric power is interrupted. You should also have batteries, blankets, flashlights, first aid kit, rubber boots, rubber gloves, and a NOAA Weather Radio or other battery operated radio easily available.

How do I know my risks?

- ✓ Is your home, business or school in a floodplain? Where is water likely to collect on the roadways you most often travel? What is the fastest way to get to higher ground? Knowing the answers to these questions ahead of time can save your life.
- ✓ For information on finding out whether your home lies in a floodplain zone, you can contact the Rio Arriba County Planning and Zoning Office at 505-753-7774

How do I stay informed?

- ✓ Monitor local radio and television (including NOAA Weather Radio), internet and social media for information and updates

How do I avoid flood waters?

- ✓ Do not walk through flood waters. It only takes six inches of moving water to knock you off your feet. If you are trapped by moving water, move to the highest possible point and call 911 for help.
- ✓ Do not drive into flooded roadways or around a barricade; Turn Around, Don't Drown! Water may be deeper than it appears and can hide many hazards (i.e. sharp objects, washed out road surfaces, electrical wires, chemicals, etc). A vehicle caught in swiftly moving water can be swept away in a matter of seconds. Twelve inches of water can float a car or small SUV and 18 inches of water can carry away large vehicles.
- ✓ Get out of areas subject to flooding and get to higher ground immediately.

My home was flooded during a storm. What should I do now?

- Take photos of your damage and contact your insurance company. You may then begin cleanup of damage. Contact Jemez Electrical at 505-753-2105 to make sure your home is okay to run electricity.

Can I apply for Federal Assistance if my house is flooded? Where?

- You may log onto <http://www.fema.gov/disaster-survivor-assistance>

What is the County's role during a flood?

- The County will do their best to protect lives and property. They will have resources available to make all public right-of-ways passable. The County cannot do any work on private property due to the Anti-Donation Clause unless it is a life and limb situation.

Where can I find out about evacuations, shelters, road closures, power failures and other flood related information?

- Tune into your local news and radio station for information. The County reversed E-911 system CodeRed will be utilized to get information out including evacuation, shelters, road closures, power failures and other emergency information. The CodeRed link for all residence to sign up to receive notifications is <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/570CABD03DF3>

Who do I call if my road gets washed out?

- If it is a private road the land owners are responsible fixing the damage. The New Mexico State Constitution's Anti-Donation Clause (Art. IX, Sec. 14) states:

Neither the state nor any county, school district or municipality, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit or make any donation to or in aid of any person, association or public or private corporation or in aid of any private enterprise

- If it is a County road you can contact the County Public Works Office at 505-747-1402.

What do I do if I have special needs and I am in a flood risk area?

- If you have to get out of an affected area call 911 and advise them of your situation and your location.

What do I do if there is a chemical spill during the flood?

- If you witness a spill contact 911 immediately and provide them with as much information as possible.

What do I do about electricity if my home or business is flooded?

- Don't go into a basement, or any room, if water covers the electrical outlets or if cords are submerged. If you see sparks or hear buzzing, crackling, snapping or popping noises --get out! Stay out of water that may have electricity in it!
- Turn off your main breaker box located outside your residence. Every house has a meter pole outside with a cutoff switch. If you need assistance doing so you may contact Jemez Electrical at 505-753-2105.

Will my drinking water be contaminated by flood waters?

- Yes. You need to provide the New Mexico Environment Department with a water sample for testing. They will advise you what needs to be done. Their website is <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/> and phone number is 505-753-7256.

Will my private well be contaminated by flood waters?

- Yes. If your well house is underground you must turn off electricity until the water is pumped from the well house. You can contact a plumber.

Do I need to worry about mold? Who can help?

- Yes. You may contact the New Mexico Environment Department at 505-753-7256 or visit their website at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/>

Are there other diseases I should worry about associated with flooding?

- ✓ Open wounds and rashes exposed to flood waters can become infected. To protect yourself and your family,
 - Avoid exposure to flood waters if you have an open wound.
 - Cover open wounds with a waterproof bandage.
 - Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing well with soap and clean water.
 - If a wound develops redness, swelling, or drainage, seek immediate medical attention
- ✓ Eating or drinking anything contaminated by flood water can cause diarrheal disease. To protect yourself and your family,
 - Practice good hygiene (hand washing) after contact with flood waters.
 - Do not allow children to play in flood water areas.
 - Wash children's hands frequently (always before meals).
 - Do not allow children to play with toys that have been contaminated by flood water and have not been disinfected.
- ✓ Although the West Nile virus mainly infects birds, it can be transmitted to humans and other animals by certain species of mosquitoes that take blood meals from both birds and humans. The bite from just one infected mosquito is all that is needed to transfer the disease. To protect yourself and family,
 - Avoid flood waters as much as possible.
 - Wear enough clothing to protect yourself from getting bit.
 - Spray yourself with repellent.

What do I do if my septic tank is flooded?

- ✓ Contact the New Mexico Environment Department at 505-753-7256 or visit their website at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/> You can also contact a certified septic tank pumping company of your choice.

Who do I call for assistance with livestock or pets?

- ✓ Contact local animal control office for small pets at 505-747-1402 or local animal shelter at 505-753-8662. For livestock and large animals you can contact your County Extension office at 505-685-4523 or New Mexico Livestock at 505-841-6161.

What is a Disaster Declaration?

- ✓ A document displaying an announcement regarding a disaster area in a region or a locale, heavily damaged by natural, technological or social hazards. Disaster areas affect the population living in the community by dramatic increase in expense, loss of energy, food and services; and finally increase the risk of disease for citizens.

Can the local Fire Department come and pump water from my yard?

- ✓ The only way the fire department can pump water from someone's yard is if it is a life or death situation and they need to get the person out.

Note from Emergency Manager:

Recently, flooding from this year's monsoon events were quite significant, affecting several parts of the state. Many private property owners were affected by damages sustained by the storms and subsequent flooding.

- In anticipation of heavy flooding, the State preemptively declared a statewide disaster and issued an Executive Order releasing \$750,000 to the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to handle response and recovery efforts statewide. These funds are to assist local, county and tribal governments make repairs and pay for recovery efforts caused by the weather related events. This money is for government infrastructure only. The New Mexico State Constitution's Anti-Donation Clause (Art. IX, Sec. 14) states:

Neither the state nor any county, school district or municipality, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit or make any donation to or in aid of any person, association or public or private corporation or in aid of any private enterprise

- This clause **explicitly** prohibits the use of state funds for the repair of personal or private infrastructure, even damage due to natural disasters.
- After the State had declared an emergency and released the funds through the Executive Order, the State can then ask President Barack Obama for a Presidential Disaster Declaration, which upon approval will allow for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff to be deployed to the state to make damage assessments on both public and private infrastructure.
- Once the preliminary damage assessments have been made, FEMA will determine what projects are eligible for federal funding through the public assistance program.
- The mission of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program is to provide assistance to State, Tribal and local governments, and certain types of Private Nonprofit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President.
- Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental Federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, or restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations.
- The PA Program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation measures during the recovery process. The Federal share of assistance is not less than 75% of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration.
- The grantee (usually the State) determines how the non-Federal share (up to 25%) is split with the subgrantees (eligible applicants). FEMA also has a individual assistance program which assists individuals financially, but it is only used in extremely severe circumstances.
- To qualify for the individual assistance program, the state must meet a dollar threshold in private infrastructure damage. For last year's flooding event, the state did not qualify due to the lack of damage needed to meet the qualifying threshold.
- If you have had damage to your property, you need to work with your homeowners insurance representative or flood insurance representative to see if they can assist with repairs if they qualify under your policy.

Important links

www.ready.gov

www.redcross.org

www.whatstheplan.org