

What should I do if a flood occurs?

Canberra is a well planned city, and development in flood prone areas has always been avoided. Therefore, although flooding can occur it is generally not very wide spread. However, no areas are completely immune to flooding and there are actions all ACT residents can take to keep themselves, their families and properties safe:

- ✓ Keep listening to the radio. Flood information including safety advice, evacuations and road closures may be broadcast over local radio stations
- ✓ Remember, schools and workplaces have emergency procedures for these situations to keep children and workers safe
- ✓ Stay clear of possible flash flood areas when severe weather is forecast and reconsider non-essential travel. When flash flooding is likely the best action to take is to leave low-lying homes and businesses (evacuation) well before flooding begins
- ✓ If flooding has started take care NOT to drive through flood waters. Find a safe alternative route or park your car and wait until the water flow has subsided
- ✓ Stay away from and keep children clear of storm water drains, creeks, rivers, causeways, culverts and any low lying areas
- ✓ If you are trapped by flood water seek refuge in the highest part of a sturdy building
- ✓ Locate and activate your home or business Floodsafe plan and check your emergency kit
- ✓ Check on your neighbours and make sure they are aware of potential flooding
- ✓ Stack possessions, records, stock or equipment on benches and table, placing electrical items on top
- ✓ Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level
- ✓ Move animals, including agisted animals, to high ground and prepare pets for possible evacuation
- ✓ Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage

How can the ACTSES help you?

The ACTSES is responsible for planning and responding to floods in the ACT. This includes educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During floods the ACTSES will provide flood information, safety advice and can arrange for the delivery of essential supplies to people isolated by floodwater. When required, the ACTSES will conduct evacuations and undertake flood rescue with the assistance of other emergency management services.

Where can I get more information?

www.esa.act.gov.au/ACTSES and ACTSES social media sites
www.bom.gov.au/australia/flood
www.ga.gov.au/hazards
www.bom.gov.au

For more information on flooding in the ACT call 132 281 or visit the Emergency Services page at www.actmapi.act.gov.au/

For more information on preparing for or recovering from flood visit the ACTSES website: www.esa.act.gov.au/actses



ACT
Government



FOR HELP IN
FLOODS OR STORMS CALL

132 500



Be Flood Safe in the ACT



Cover image: Richardson Local Shops, 2012.

Flooding in the ACT

Flooding is water where water is not wanted!

In the ACT, it is usually due to intense local rain (flash flooding) or inundation of local rivers, creeks and lakes (riverine flooding).

The urban areas of the ACT are well planned with high standards of regulation and engineering standards significantly reducing the risk of riverine floods impacting property and infrastructure.

Flash flooding is more likely to occur than riverine flooding. Flash flooding will tend to occur over a local area or catchment and is caused by intense storms which may often be of short duration.

Flash floods are unpredictable. Flood waters can move quickly over the land via natural depressions or along roadways and parklands. The combination of heavy rainfall, run off, and existing water in creeks and drains causes water levels to rise quickly.

Whatever the cause, entering any floodwater places lives at risk. Floodwater can be several metres deep, rise quickly and move fast. You won't be able to see under the surface of the water which may be filled with debris.

Low-lying areas (such as storm water drains, creeks and causeways) are susceptible to flash flooding and are dangerous places to be if it floods.

Anyone could be affected by flooding, and there are simple things residents can do to protect themselves, their homes and families.

In the ACT a network of low lying areas called retarding basins have been incorporated into the storm water system to catch and temporarily hold flood water. Retarding basins often accommodate multi-purpose usage, such as sports fields. Visit the Stormwater page on the Transport Canberra and City Services website www.tccs.act.gov.au for further information.

How can I reduce my risk from floods?



Getting to know your catchment area is the first step to understanding your risk and being prepared for floods

Prepare your family and property now

- ✓ Keep your property well maintained; gutters, downpipes and drains should be kept clear.
- ✓ Talk to your children about the dangers of floodwaters. Educate them not to go near floodways or play in storm drains (even during dry weather)
- ✓ Be aware of signs of flash flooding in your local area. These can include heavy rainfall, rushing or pooling water in low lying areas.
- ✓ Talk with your neighbours and people who have lived in the area for a while about the local flood risks. Knowing your flood risk will help you plan
- ✓ Make a Floodsafe plan with your family so that you know what to do when flooding occurs – Even if your property is not inundated by flood water you might lose power, water and sewerage, and if you live in rural areas, you could become isolated.
- ✓ Prepare an Emergency Kit for your home and/or business, which should include a portable battery powered radio and torch, spare batteries, first aid kit, candles, waterproof matches and important papers
- ✓ View maps of potential riverine flooding at www.actmapl.act.gov.au/

Know where to go

- ✓ Get to know your local area and identify possible evacuation routes in your planning. In the event of an evacuation, listen to emergency service advice and use your local knowledge to identify the safest route to travel
- ✓ Check with friends or relatives outside your area to organise a place to go and find out where local evacuation centres could be

Know who to call

- ✓ For emergency help in floods and storms, call the ACTSES on 132 500
- ✓ Keep local emergency numbers handy (in or near your phone, or on your fridge)
- ✓ In a life threatening emergency call 000 (triple zero)

Know your plan

- ✓ Review your plan annually to keep it current
- ✓ Check your emergency kit regularly to restock any out of date items, such as batteries, and ensure you restock after any use
- ✓ Plan out alternate routes when walking to and from school, the local shops, etc

