

Selecting a Contractor

It may be necessary to obtain the services of a qualified contractor to conduct repairs on your property following flood damages. Keep the following in mind before hiring a contractor:

- ◆ Verify the firm's reputation.
- ◆ Verify the contractor is licensed, certified and/or registered for the work that will be conducted.
- ◆ Ask for past references.
- ◆ Ask for a written estimate.
- ◆ Ask for a legal written contract.
- ◆ Ask for any guarantees in writing.
- ◆ Obtain and maintain a copy of the final signed contract.
- ◆ Ensure that all of the necessary permits are obtained prior to starting work.
- ◆ Prior to final payment, ensure that all required inspections are conducted and approved by the authority that has jurisdiction.

For Additional Information:

New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM)
www.state.nj.us/njoem/
or (609) 882-2000

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) www.fema.gov/hazards/floods/
or (202) 566-1600

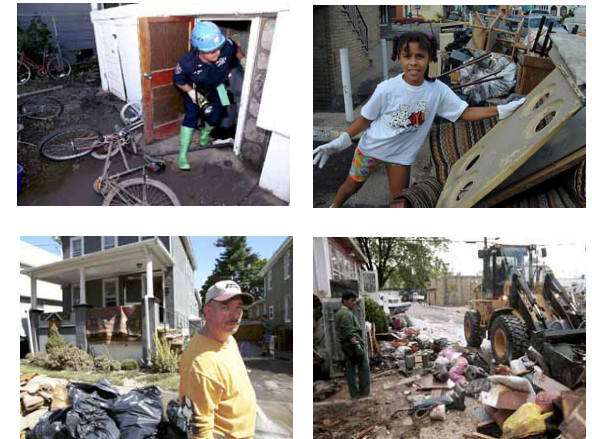
American Red Cross:
www.redcross.org
or call your local red cross chapter



New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
Division of Codes & Standards
101 South Broad Street
PO Box 802
Trenton, NJ 08610-0802
(609) 292-7899



Flooding Hazards:



Photos by Andrea Booher/FEMA News Photo

What You Need To Know

Flooding in New Jersey

Causes of Flooding

Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss. They can be caused by any of the following:

- ◆ Hurricanes and tropical storms
- ◆ Nor'easters or extra-tropical cyclones
- ◆ Heavy rains, winter storms and spring thaws that flood river basins
- ◆ Overburdened or clogged drainage systems can cause property damage both within and outside floodplains.
- ◆ Construction and new development affect natural drainage and create new flood risks.

Evacuation Guidelines

- ◆ Follow the instructions and advice of local authorities. Local authorities are the most informed about affected areas. They will best be able to tell you what areas to avoid.
- ◆ If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Move to a safe area before access is cut off by flood water. Evacuation is much simpler and safer before flood waters become too deep for vehicles to drive through.
- ◆ Leave early enough to avoid being marooned by flooded roads. Delaying too long may allow all escape routes to become blocked.
- ◆ If you are instructed by local authorities, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve. In some areas, local authorities may advise you to turn off utilities to prevent further damage to homes and the community.
- ◆ Follow recommended evacuation routes. Shortcuts or alternate, non-recommended routes may be blocked or damaged by flood waters.

Returning to Your Property

Always take necessary precautions after a flood. Although floodwaters may be down in some areas, many dangers still exist. Here are some things to remember when returning to your property:

- ◆ Roads may still be closed because they have been damaged or are covered by water. Barricades have been placed for your protection. If you come to a barricade or a flooded road, find another route.
- ◆ Keep listening to the radio for news about what to do, where to go or what areas to avoid. Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- ◆ If you must walk or drive in areas that have been flooded: Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet, and standing water can be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- ◆ Flooding can cause familiar places to change and damage roads and walkways. Flood debris can hide animals and broken bottles, leaving the surface slippery. Avoid walking or driving in flood debris.
- ◆ Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.

Potential Flood Damage

- ◆ If your property has been flooded, it is possible that structural damage could have occurred. Foundation walls, supporting members and interior partitions can all be affected by flood waters. Appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, stoves or other fuel fired appliances could be damaged by flood waters.

- ◆ Your property's fuel source (oil, natural gas, propane, liquefied petroleum and butane) can be affected by flood waters. Above ground and underground tanks can move during flooding, and associated piping can crack or become loose.
- ◆ Your property's electrical system - both the main box and circuits - can be affected by flooding. Interior and exterior associated electrical equipment can also be damaged.
- ◆ Your property's water supply (municipal or well) can become contaminated and/or inoperable from flood waters.
- ◆ Debris can clog the sewage disposal system on your property.

Code Enforcement Process

During flooding incidents where damage has occurred, your local code enforcement agency may be called on to help you get back into your property. These agencies will provide property owners with the necessary support to evaluate conditions in their properties.

- ◆ Building inspectors will access the damage to foundation walls and look for signs of structural damage.
- ◆ Electrical inspectors will monitor the status of your property's electrical system and recommend when electrical service could be reconnected to the property by your utility provider.
- ◆ Plumbing inspectors will evaluate the condition of your appliances, piping and fuel service, and recommend when it is safe to turn service back on.
- ◆ Fire Protection inspectors will evaluate the level of fire protection within buildings