WEATHER TOGETHER
Prepare Today. Protect Tomorrow.

COUNTY OF MARIN

READY marin



Flood Preparedness Guide

Has your home, business or neighborhood flooded before? Now is the time to prepare.

If you've experienced flooding from overflowing creeks, king tides, heavy rain or backed-up drainage systems, you know how quickly water can threaten your property, close roads and disrupt your life.

Marin County is preparing for winter storms. You can, too.

This guide builds on the County's ReadyMarin preparedness resources, with practical steps for people whose properties or neighborhoods have flooded before.

The Marin County Board of Supervisors approved an additional $3.021 million for winter storm and El Niño preparedness.

How the County is preparing

- **Improving drainage:** Inspecting and clearing culverts, storm drains and drainage channels; servicing pump stations; and preparing improvements to vulnerable drainage infrastructure.
- **Providing sandbags:** Maintaining supplies of sand and sandbags at designated locations, including prefilled sandbags at selected sites. Supplies will be replenished as available.
- **Expanding flood protection:** Investing in temporary floodwalls, large fillable water barriers, reusable barriers, and mobile sandbag-filling equipment.
- **Shoreline protection:** Work at vulnerable shoreline locations, including McInnis Marsh and McNears Beach.
- **Preparing emergency crews and equipment:** Testing pumps, readying portable pumps and other emergency equipment, and preparing personnel for deployment.
- **Coordinating across Marin:** Working with cities, towns, flood control districts, fire agencies and other partners to identify vulnerable areas and prepare for storm response.

What the County can - and cannot - guarantee

The County will prioritize available flood protection resources in areas where forecasts, known flood risks and changing conditions indicate the greatest threats.

Get ahead of the storm - use the Hazard Look-Up Map to enter your address and identify specific risks by your home or business. These efforts can reduce flooding, but no agency can prevent flooding everywhere or guarantee protection for every property.

That's why it's especially important for people who have experienced flooding before to prepare now.

During flooding, visit **Emergency.MarinCounty.gov** for updated information.

Your Flood History is Your Best Starting Point

Protect Your Family – Know When to Leave

If your neighborhood has flooded before, it may happen again, don't wait until roads become impassable.

Floodwater can rise quickly, close roads, interrupt utilities and isolate neighborhoods. Water may also contain sewage and other dangerous contaminants.

Your safest choice may be to leave before flooding begins, even before an evacuation warning is issued.

Make your emergency plan NOW

- **Know your risk.** Review ReadyMarin's Hazard Look Up Map. Remember where your property, neighborhood streets and nearby creeks have flooded before.
- **Choose somewhere safe to go.** Identify family, friends or lodging on higher ground in Marin or elsewhere. Plan for the possibility of being away for several days or longer.
- **Know your routes out.** Identify more than one way to leave if possible. If Highway 101 or local roads have flooded or closed before, consider leaving before storms and high tides arrive.
- **Prepare a Go Bag.** Include medications, important documents, identification, clothing, chargers, food and other essentials for 3–5 days. Include supplies for children and pets.
- **Prepare a Stay Box.** In case officials advise sheltering in place, have water, food, flashlights, batteries, medications, sanitation supplies and other essentials for 3–5 days.
- **Plan for health and mobility needs.** If anyone depends on medical equipment, needs assistance moving or could be endangered by isolation or power outages, arrange help and consider leaving early.
- **Help neighbors prepare.** Check on older adults, people living alone and neighbors who may need help obtaining sandbags or evacuating.

When storms or high tides approach

- **Stay informed.** Monitor official forecasts, creek and tide conditions, road closures and County emergency updates. Sign up for AlertMarin.
- **Consider leaving early.** If your property or access roads have flooded before, make your decision while travel is still safe. Don't wait until water blocks your route.
- **Follow emergency instructions.** Take evacuation warnings seriously and leave immediately when an evacuation order is issued. If officials direct you to shelter in place, follow those instructions.
- **Never walk or drive through floodwater.** Even shallow water may contain strong currents, hidden hazards, sewage or electrical dangers. Never drive around barricades or enter flooded buildings with possible electrical or structural hazards.

Keep These Resources Handy

- **El Niño and Winter Storm Preparedness.**
  Preparedness information and resources.
  ReadyMarin.org/ElNino
- **Report Issues: FixItMarin**
  Report non-emergency issues, such as flooded or blocked roads in unincorporated Marin, through **FixItMarin.com** or by phone:
  - Urban/East Marin: 415-473-7388
  - West Marin: 415-473-2726
  - For issues within Marin's 11 incorporated cities and towns, contact the local jurisdiction directly.
- **Current Emergencies, Sandbag Locations & AlertMarin Sign-Up**
  Find information about active emergencies, locate sandbag distribution sites using the interactive map, and sign up for local emergency notifications through AlertMarin.
  Emergency.MarinCounty.gov
- **Email Flood Questions**
  Questions about creek or drainage blockages and responsibility.
  FloodInquiry@MarinCounty.gov
- **When to call 9-1-1**
  - For medical or life-threatening emergencies, call 9-1-1 immediately for help.
  - If you see a downed power line, stay away, do not touch it, and call 9-1-1.

Use Your Flood History to Prepare

Marin County and its partners are preparing. Your actions now can help protect your property, your family and your community.

Protect Your Property Now

Use what happened during previous floods to prepare for the next one. You know your property better than anyone. Think about where water entered, what was damaged and which protective measures might have helped.

Your flood protection checklist:

- ☐ **Follow the water.** Walk around your property. Where did water enter during past storms? Where does it collect? Check garage doors, driveways, low windows, crawl spaces, patios and other vulnerable openings.
- ☐ **Get sandbags before you need them.** Purchase sandbags at your local hardware store. You can also obtain free sandbags at public filling stations across the County, however on-site resources vary. Free supplies may run out during storms.
- ☐ **Know how to place sandbags.** Learn where and how to position them to help redirect shallow water away from vulnerable openings. Don't block public drainage or redirect water toward neighboring properties. Note that filled sandbags are heavy. Have a plan to transport and position them yourself, with assistance from family, neighbors or contractors. Don't count on County crews to install sandbags at individual homes or businesses.
- ☐ **Consider temporary flood barriers.** Removable door barriers, flood boards or other products may help protect vulnerable openings. Not every barrier is appropriate for every property, especially where deeper flooding is possible.
- ☐ **Clear gutters, drains and downspouts - clear your creeks and drainages.** Clear leaves and debris from gutters, downspouts, drains and private drainage areas. Arrange appropriate maintenance of private creeks and channels.
- ☐ **Report potential drainage blockages.** If you see fallen trees, debris or obstructions and aren't sure who's responsible, email **FloodInquiry@MarinCounty.gov**. For non-emergency problems involving public roads or storm drains in unincorporated Marin County, use **FixItMarin.com**.
- ☐ **Secure outdoor belongings.** Move or secure garbage cans, furniture, lumber, storage containers, tanks and other objects that could float away, cause damage or block drainage.
- ☐ **Move vehicles and valuables early.** Park vehicles on higher ground before flooding begins. Move electronics, records, irreplaceable belongings and hazardous materials above previous flood levels.
- ☐ **Help protect your neighborhood.** In some areas, the County may request temporary permission to enter private property to install emergency flood protection. Respond promptly if contacted. Your cooperation may be important to protecting neighboring properties.

Find Sandbags Before the Storm Arrives

Purchase sandbags at your local hardware store.

Use the County's interactive map to find free sandbag distribution locations. Some stations provide sand and empty bags; others may have prefilled bags. Availability varies.

To find a location, scan the QR code or visit Emergency.MarinCounty.gov/Find-Emergency-Sandbags.

Reduce Damage to Your Home or Business

Some improvements can provide protection well beyond this winter.

Sandbags and temporary barriers are only part of flood preparation. Consider changes that may help reduce damage to your building, equipment and belongings if flooding happens again.

Protect your building and equipment

- **Raise vulnerable utilities.** Consider elevating electrical panels, heating and cooling systems, water heaters, pumps, batteries and other equipment above expected flood levels. Work with qualified professionals.
- **Check for sewage backup risks.** If sewage has backed up during past storms, ask a licensed plumber whether a backwater valve or other plumbing improvements could help.
- **Check sump pumps and water alarms.** Test existing sump pumps, including backup power. Consider installing a water alarm to warn you when water begins collecting in vulnerable areas.
- **Consider flood-resistant improvements.** In areas that have flooded repeatedly, flood-resistant building materials and appropriately designed lower enclosures may reduce damage. Consult a qualified professional before modifying foundations, walls or drainage systems.
- **Understand flood barrier limitations.** Barriers can help with some shallow flooding, but keeping deeper water outside a building can create dangerous pressure against walls and foundations. Seek professional advice about what is appropriate for your property.
- **Protect your business.** Move inventory, computers, equipment and important records above previous flood levels. Plan for employee safety, interrupted deliveries and temporary closure if roads flood.
- **Use licensed contractors.** The Marin Building Association has a list of licensed contractors. The interactive list can be found at **MarinBuilders.com** and navigate to "Find a Contractor."



Protect yourself financially

Review your flood insurance **now.**

Standard homeowners, renters and many business insurance policies generally do not cover flood damage.

- Homeowners and businesses can purchase flood insurance for eligible buildings and belongings.
- Renters can purchase flood coverage for their personal belongings, even if they don't own the building.
- New flood insurance policies often have a waiting period before coverage begins.
- Photograph your property and possessions now. Keep digital copies of insurance policies, identification and other important records.

Learn more at **FloodSmart.gov.**



An Important Reminder

Protecting your property isn't always about keeping every drop of water out.

It also means reducing damage to utilities and belongings, avoiding unsafe structural modifications, keeping people safe and making recovery easier after flooding.

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