



Flood Event Checklist and Tips

Disasters can be extremely disruptive, and the Canadian Red Cross has found that providing timely and relevant information can support those impacted to more effectively navigate their own recovery following an event.

The level of financial specific assistance the Canadian Red Cross is able to provide following any disruptive event depends on the level of public donations and government support.

The purpose of this document is to provide general flood specific information to those experiencing a flooding event. The information presented below prompts you to consider: (a) institutions that should be notified of your flood event; (b) a general understanding of your optional flood insurance coverage; and (c) tips and check list items for navigating potential flood insurance claims. It is critical that you understand your insurance policy. Contact your broker and/or insurer with questions.

I Have Experienced a Flood (aka Water) Event

Now what?

Initial Steps:

If you have insurance, call your insurance representative and open a claim.

☞ *Most insurers have a 24-hour claims reporting line.*

☞ Ask your insurer what to do next?

Consider asking:

☞ *Should you remove contents before they become further damaged?*

Policies require that you take measures to mitigate (aka prevent further damage from occurring), so be sure to document conditions before and after mitigation measures.

☞ *Will a contractor come out to your home to assess the damage?*

☞ *What are your mitigation responsibilities?*

! **Be sure to take detailed notes of your conversation**

☞ *Review your insurance policy and become familiar with your coverage and its limitations.*

☞ Check out our **Understanding Your Insurance Policy – Homeowner fact sheet**.

Notify your mortgage lender.

☞ *Your mortgage agreement is a contract between you and your mortgage holder. Each contract is different. It is very important to review your mortgage agreement to determine whether you have an obligation to report the disaster to your mortgage holder.*

! For example, it is common for mortgage contracts to include a clause that requires the borrower to “give notice to the lender of any violation of the applicable environmental laws or any investigation or inquiry by any governmental authority or agent in connection therewith.”^[1] *It is possible that a natural disaster will give rise to a violation, investigation or inquiry which would trigger an obligation to report.*

! Even if you are not contractually required to report loss or damage to your mortgage holder, *it is a good idea to notify your bank in the case that you wish to attempt to make payment arrangements on your mortgage or other financial products (credit cards, line of credit, loans, etc.) to provide temporary financial relief.*

Notify your place of employment and your children's school(s).

Consult your provincial / territorial authority for what assistance may be available and familiarize yourself with the requirements for the program:

LOCATION	PROGRAM
ALBERTA	DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM
BRITISH COLUMBIA	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
MANITOBA	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NEW BRUNSWICK	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NORTH WEST TERRITORIES	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NOVA SCOTIA	THE DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NUNAVUT	NO DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
ONTARIO	DISASTER RECOVERY ASSISTANCE FOR ONTARIANS
PEI	NO DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
QUEBEC	GENERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
SASKATCHEWAN	PROVINCIAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
YUKON	NO DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

☞ *Each Governmental Authority should have their own website with information on how to apply and if the program is available following a flood event*

[1] Walter M Traub, Falconridge on Mortgages, 5th ed (Toronto: LexisNexis, 2018) at §10:60.160 “Covenants Relating to Environment”.

STABILIZATION DURING DISPLACEMENT (INCLUDING EVACUATION) AND YOUR PATH TO RECOVERY

Displacement can be extremely disruptive. Consider these tips from other beneficiaries impacted by past events that have worked with the Canadian Red Cross:

- Evaluate what decisions need to happen immediately and which ones can wait
- Outline what decisions would be best made with the support of others such as professional services
- Take time to outline your next steps as a household for the near, short term and longer term of your displacement (worst case/best case planning) – shared decision making can provide a wonderful foundation of planning
- Ensure the wellbeing of you and your household; with this you can ensure you are in the best mindset to outline your own recovery

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Disasters and emergencies can cause significant disruption and add stress to your life. If you experience stress reactions that make it impossible to function normally over a long period of time, seek help. One option is to contact your local health facility, or a local crisis support line. For immediate **assistance support** anywhere in Canada, **please call Crisis Services Canada** at 1-833-456-4566.

TIPS

 **Keep all receipts, quotes and invoices for all costs (including time you are prevented from residing in your home due to the flood). This can be helpful with insurance claims, and applications to governmental assistance programs.**

! *Costs may not always be reimbursable but keeping documentation can help if there is assistance available*

 **Be wary of surge support by new 'cash only' vendors unwilling to provide a receipt (think clean up or tree removal).**

! *Although cost effective, it may mean that:*

- *you do not have documentation for the expense,*
- *the work may not have a warranty,*
- *in some cases the work may be performed by a non-professional,*
- *you may be liable if there is an injury on your property.*

 **Take time to review what evacuation and displacement from home will mean for your household.**

- ✓ Consider what steps you can take to establish a temporary routine
- ✓ Adjust your budget where required for additional costs and make sure there is a contingency for delays/changes

 **Documents can spread out quickly, become hard to find or disorganized and overwhelming. There will be many documents, conversations and interactions.**

- ✓ Keep a record of your communication with your insurers, banks / mortgage lenders and other third parties
- ✓ You can request copies of expert reports and estimates from insurers, if helpful
- ✓ Some people find it helpful to open a separate email account for correspondence related to rebuild/repair/displacement
- ✓ Check out Apps for scanning to a cloud or file management system

 **It's likely you'll work with and meet many new people through the displacement and recovery process, it may be helpful to start a contact list that can be shared within your household.**

- ✓ Consider a shared contact list for your household
- ✓ Consider a file for business cards
- ✓ Create a contact list in your notes (in your phone) or an App
- ✓ Identify opportunities for group or shared conversations, where helpful

 **In a disaster event, many municipal, provincial, public and private groups offer help.**

- ✓ Consider searching for and signing up for alerts social media pages and accounts offering information and/or assistance

Am I Insured for Water Related Events?

Unlike fires, water events tend not to be insured as part of a standard policy. Certain events such as burst pipes or leakage from appliances may be covered.

You can usually tell if you have coverage for water related events in the **Declarations section**, the **Endorsements section** and the **Exclusions section** of your Policy.

☞ These three sections should be reviewed together

☞ Basic insurance policies include coverage for some water perils in standard insurance policies

☞ May be Covered

Typically, if you purchased optional coverage enhancements (these are not standard)

🏠 *Overland flood – tends to be rising waters from a body of water hitting your property, think water entering through your doorways or windows as a result of a flood event*

🚰 *Sewer backup – tends to be when water backs up from a sewer, sump pump or septic tank failure*

🌊 *Groundwater – tends to be water from seepage or an influx of water through basement foundation or walls, think a leaky window well*

! NOTE:

Even if you do have coverage for water events, there may be specific circumstances for which this coverage may not apply. Ensure to read your entire policy carefully to confirm what these exclusions might be. Typical examples of exclusions might be:

- *Loss or damage which occurs while the dwelling is under construction or vacant*
- *Loss or damage occurring as the result of a maintenance issue*
- *Mold*
- *Continuous or repeated leakage or seepage (whether or not the homeowner was aware of such loss or damage)*

Your deductible for water insured perils could be different than your general deductible amount.

☞ For example, your policy deductible may be \$1,000 in the event of a fire but \$2,000 in the event of overland flooding

! Be sure to check your policy and consult with your broker/insurer for coverage terms and limitations

Your policy limit might be different in a water related event.

☞ *For example, your total policy limits might be \$900k but for events related to water, you are given a sub-limit of \$20k*

! *This means your insurer will only compensate and/or reimburse you up to \$20k (subject to any deductibles you are required to pay).*

*** WATER INSURANCE COVERAGE IN CANADA IS EVOLVING QUICKLY TO MEET THE RISK OF AGING MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURES AND CLIMATE CHANGE. BE SURE TO CHECK WITH YOUR BROKER/INSURER REGULARLY TO ENSURE YOU HAVE THE COVERAGE YOU REQUIRE AND ARE UP TO DATE ON NEW PRODUCT OFFERINGS. ***

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