

FLOODS

Definition of a Flood

A flood is typically a natural phenomenon caused by rain, large waves, high tides or storm surge. However, broken water pipes can also cause localized flooding. In simple terms, a flood is a temporary rise in water level caused by water overflowing onto land that is normally dry. Preparation is the key to reducing property damage caused by floods.



Types of Flooding

Intense rainfall from cold fronts, tropical depressions, tropical storms and hurricanes can cause flooding. The Cayman Islands are vulnerable to flood waters, both from events that bring torrential rain and from storm surge that breaches the coastline and inundates the interior. In addition, the low lying nature of the Islands generally means that the water table is often just a few feet below the ground. Therefore flooding can occur rapidly with short duration / periods of intense rainfall.

Built-up areas can experience much greater run off than low density residential or rural areas due to abundant concrete and tarmac surface cover. Heavy rainfall can cause deep pockets of water to accumulate making roads

impassable. As a result houses, businesses and parking lots can be affected.

BEFORE A FLOOD



Protecting your Home

Have check valves installed in your building to prevent sewerage from backing up and entering your home. As a last resort, use large corks or stoppers to plug showers, tubs or basins. Check homeowner policy to determine if you are covered for flood damage. Take an inventory of all personal items, including model type, serial numbers, pictures and descriptions. Place along with important documents in a safe water resistant location.

Sand Bags

Once filled with sand the bags can be stacked and can form a fairly effective barrier against flood water. Typically the bags are used to protect items like exterior air conditioning compressors, and in some instances used to protect doorways to prevent water entering the building. Homeowners with a concrete fence may consider using the bags to create a barrier across gated sections of their property. Sand bags are available for purchase at the C.I. Red Cross Building on Thomas Russell Way.

Raising Items off Floor Level

A fairly effective, quick and cheap strategy for preserving property in a flood is to raise items such as furniture and appliances up on concrete blocks. A couple of feet may be all that is needed to keep property safe. If possible also raise air conditioner units, fuel tanks and generators. Unplug all appliances before a flood.

Protecting your vehicle

In Hurricane Ivan over fifty percent of all the vehicles were inundated with salt water. It is important to find an elevated location for your vehicle prior to the approach of a hurricane. During a hurricane it is possibility that the sea will breach the coastline and travel inland.



DURING A FLOOD

Driving on Flooded Roads

Road networks are vulnerable to flooding and will pose a risk to motorists. If possible, avoid driving in and around flooded roads. **Remember** if you have to drive through a flooded road **drive slowly**.

If you hit flood water at speed you could lose control of the vehicle and the vehicle may stall out. Be especially vigilant at night.

Appreciate the Power of Flowing Water

In some locations such as the Savannah Gully, water from storm surge may flow across the road. Regardless of the strength of the flow of water it is strongly recommended that you avoid driving through this area when water is flowing. Most vehicles will float in just two feet of water!



Motorists who attempt to cross moving flood waters are putting themselves, their vehicles and any other occupants of their vehicles at risk.

AFTER A FLOOD

Enter a building with caution. Ensure electricity is turned off or made safe. Look for hazards such as submerged appliances and broken glass. Take pictures of the damage for insurance claims.

Cost to business

Loss or damage to property can result and clean up costs are associated with floods. Increased traffic congestion, employee

absenteeism, flooded parking lots can result in lost business.

Cleaning up after a flood

If your property is flooded remove all wet materials as soon as possible. Damp materials provide an ideal environment for the growth of mould and other microorganisms. Thoroughly wash and disinfect all walls, floors, doors, closets and shelves that were affected. Care must be taken when using chemical cleaning agents. Never mix bleach with anything but water. Mixing bleach and Lysol (Pine sol) can produce highly toxic fumes. Wear rubber boots, mask and rubber gloves while cleaning. Wash hands and face often with soap.

Public Health Threats

Flood waters maybe contaminated with sewerage. This water may contain viruses and bacteria. Don't risk consuming anything that has been contaminated by flood waters, as it may result in serious illness. Stagnant water may encourage the hatching of mosquitoes, so practice preventative measures; empty and remove outdoor receptacles that can accumulate water for mosquito larvae and



purchase effective repellent. Also the humidity and moisture may encourage the growth of mould. It is important to use disinfectant in your home to kill any germs and harmful bacteria after a flood.

HAZARD MANAGEMENT CAYMAN ISLANDS

FLOOD

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