Flooding are the most common natural disaster in the United States. In fact, flooding causes more than $2 billion in property damage every year.

Flooding is caused by a number of factors, but the two main concerns are rainfall intensity and duration. Intensity refers to the rate of rainfall, and duration is how long it rains.

During periods of intense rain – or extended periods of steady rain – even the smallest streams, creek beds, or drains can overflow and cause flooding. Even if you live in a place where flooding is not typical, remember that anywhere it rains, it can flood.

Certain conditions, such as topography, new construction, or erosion, can cause flooding to occur in areas where it wasn’t previously present. Areas near recent wildfires are particularly susceptible to flooding due to the loss of vegetation on the hillsides and natural waterways that become clogged with ash and debris.

The best preparation for possible flooding is to plan ahead. This brochure will show you some of the things you can do to protect your home, property, and family. There are three simple steps you can take to help protect your home from floodwaters and debris: READY, SET, and GO!

READY – will teach you what you can do to prepare before flooding occurs. SET – will show you what to do if flooding is imminent. GO! – will give you the information you need to safely evacuate.
Properly placed sandbags will redirect water, mud and debris but they will not completely seal out water. Sandbags should be used for low-flow protection (up to about two feet). Redlands Fire stations maintain only a limited supply of sandbags to be used during an emergency. Homeowners should not depend on that supply. Sand and sandbags can be purchased at many home improvement and hardware stores. Purchase sandbags early and make them a part of your emergency supplies so they will be available if you need them.

**Sandbags**

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- When possible, use close-weave burlap bags as sandbags.
- Fill sandbags half-full. Use sand if it is available, but any local soil may be used.
- Remove debris and obstructions from the area where the sandbags will be placed.
- When placing sandbags, fold the top of the sandbag down and rest the bag on its folded top.
- The half-filled bags should be placed lengthwise and parallel to the direction of the water flow. Stamp on the bags as they are placed to eliminate gaps.
- Place the sandbags to redirect water, mud or debris - not dam it.
- Do not place sandbags directly against the outer of a building. Wet bags can create added pressure on the foundation.
- Sandbags should be placed in staggered layers. Limit the layers to three unless the sandbags are braced or stacked in pyramids (see diagrams).
- It takes time to construct a wall of sandbags. Plan ahead! It is much easier to place sandbags before you are dealing with heavy runoff.

**How Many Bags Do I Need?**

For 100 lineal feet of a sandbag wall:

- **One foot high:** 600-800 bags, 10-13 cubic yards of sand.
- **Two feet high:** 1,400-2,000 bags, 23-33 cubic yards of sand.
- **Three feet high:** 2,200-3,400 bags, 37-57 cubic yards of sand.

**Sandbags at Stations:**

- Station 261 – 525 E. Citrus
- Station 262 – 1690 Garden
- Station 263 – 10 W. Pennsylvania
- Station 264 – 1270 W. Park Avenue

**Sand & Shovel:**

City Yards at 1270 W. Park Ave.
Floods After Wildfires

Wildfires dramatically alter the natural landscape by removing vegetation and exposing soil to wind and rain. These changes substantially increase the risk of flash floods and debris flows, even in areas not usually prone to these hazards.

Normally, grasses, shrubs and trees slow rainfall and improve soil absorption. Leaf litter further protects the soil from erosive rainfall. Wildfires burn vegetation and leaf litter to ash, leaving the soil exposed and less able to absorb rain. The result is increased runoff which can produce flash floods and debris or mud flows. Creeks and streams can be easily overwhelmed by these flows, as can streets and homes located below hillsides. The increased flood risk may last five years or more until the vegetation is restored.

Properly installed erosion control along slopes, or the installation of small diversion berms, can slow or redirect flows away from homes and streets. Planting or seeding areas which supported native vegetation does not increase the vegetation recovery rate.

In non-native landscaped areas, property owners may replace vegetation with appropriate fire-resistant, non-invasive plants. A local landscape professional can make recommendations for your particular area.

For more information on flooding and flood preparation:

- City of Redlands
  [http://www.cityofredlands.org/floodcontrolmasterplan](http://www.cityofredlands.org/floodcontrolmasterplan)
- National Weather Service
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
  [http://www.ready.gov/floods](http://www.ready.gov/floods)

How to Get Set:

- Gather emergency supplies, evacuation items and review evacuation routes in case you are asked to evacuate.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur during periods of heavy or extended rain. If there is any possibility of a flash flood in your area, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for an evacuation order.
- Fill the gas tanks in your vehicles.
- Bring in outside furniture that could be carried away by floodwaters.
- Move furniture and other valuables to high points – upper floors if possible – in your home.
- Fill and place sandbags if necessary.
- Monitor gutters, drains, and other areas that could cause flooding. Clear away debris immediately to prevent clogging or damming.
During a Flood

- Remember to take your emergency supplies and valuables.
- When asked to leave, evacuate to higher ground.
- Stay out of flood waters and avoid moving water. Do not try to walk, swim, or drive through moving water. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Two feet of water is enough to carry away a passenger vehicle.
- Stay away from downed power lines and piles of debris.
- Constantly monitor the news media and other information outlets for weather and emergency updates.
- When evacuating, be aware of stream channels, drain channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods in these areas can occur without warning.
- Avoid parking or camping near streams, rivers, or creeks. The water may rise very quickly.
- Use a secondary evacuation route if your primary route is blocked by water.

After the Flood

After evacuating, do not return until the flooding has subsided and authorities have reopened the area to residents. Even if you were not asked to evacuate, recently flooded areas can be very hazardous and extreme caution should be used.

- Stay away from areas damaged by floodwaters, mud, or debris flows.
- Continue to monitor the media and other sources of information. Additional flooding could occur.
- Do not drive around barriers. Roadways may have been washed out, undermined, or otherwise damaged by floodwaters.
- Stay on firm ground. If forced to walk through mud-covered areas, use a stick to gauge the depth of the mud in front of you.
- Avoid standing water. It may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or sewage, or electrically charged by underground or downed power lines.
- Flooding may have caused familiar places to change. Floodwaters can erode roads and walkways. The area may be very slippery and make walking difficult. Flood debris may hide animals, broken glass, or other dangerous items.
- Use extreme caution when entering any buildings that were subjected to floodwaters, mud, or debris. Floodwaters may have caused hidden damage, affected electrical systems, or undermined the foundation.

- Remove wet contents immediately. Clean and disinfect everything that got wet and safely discard anything that actually absorbed flood water.
- Throw out any food items that have come in contact with floodwater.
- Assume that drinking water is unsafe until you are told otherwise by authorities.
- Take photos of damage for insurance claims.
- Look for fire hazards: broken gas lines, flooded electrical circuits, etc.
- Cover broken windows, holes in the roof, etc. to prevent further damage.

GO!

If flooding occurs, you are safest staying in your home if it is not being affected by floodwaters, mud or debris. If asked to evacuate, do so immediately and proceed to higher ground or an established evacuation center. If the water rises suddenly and you cannot evacuate, move to the second floor, or if necessary, the roof.

Two feet of water is enough to wash away a passenger vehicle.

Do not attempt to walk, swim or drive through moving water or flooded areas as debris can be dangerous.

Do not enter a flooded area until it is safe to do so. Flooding can wash out or undermine roads.