

FLOOD MITIGATION PREPAREDNESS

Excessive rain, a ruptured dam or levee and excessive ice melting are all examples of ways in which a waterway can be overwhelmed and produce a flooding event. Some floods can take hours or even days to mature allowing ample time to prepare and evacuate, others can advance quickly with little warning allowing little or no time to prepare and evacuate.

There are mitigation approaches entities can take to minimize the impacts resulting from flooding events. Thoughtful planning for flooding events that may put an entity at risk can pay large dividends when these events occur; thereby reducing bodily injury, property damage, business disruption, and associated insurable losses.

Below are some strategies an entity can take *prior* to a flooding event to safeguard its properties and individuals for which it is responsible for:

- Identification and knowledge of whether or not facilities under your supervision are located in a flood plain, history of flooding in such areas, and elevation of facilities in relation to streams, rivers, and dams;
- Identification and knowledge of local community emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and location of emergency shelters;
- Communication with local emergency management officials regarding special need populations under your organization's supervision and ensure affective emergency evacuation plans are practiced and maintained for use, if needed;
- Ensure routine monitoring of a National Weather Service Radio (NOAA Weather Radio) and establish procedures for facility shutdown and early release of associated personnel/individuals;
- Identification of and knowledge of where and how to shut off critical facility utilities, such as, but not limited to electric power, gas, water, hydraulics, compressed air, sewer systems, et cetera;
- Remove as much property and equipment as possible to higher elevation/ground for storage. Property of high value should be a priority;
- Move all vehicles and/or mobile equipment to higher elevation/ground;
- Construct flood barriers with sandbags or other materials;
- De- energize all electrical system components and ensure that all switches, sockets, circuit breakers, wiring and associated equipment is at least 12" above facilities projected flood elevation;
- Shut down all fuel burning equipment that is subject to flooding;
- Identification and securing of potential facility hazards prior to a flooding event;

- Ensure routine inspection/cleaning out of facilities associated drainage systems such as , but not limited to culverts, gutters, down spouts, and associated piping;
- Access to and/or installation of sump pumps at identified facilities for damage mitigation in the event of a heavy rain or flooding;
- Access to and/or installation of backflow valves or plugs at identified facilities for damage mitigation in the event of a heavy rain or flooding.

Additional information related to severe weather mitigation preparedness can be accessed at the West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management website: www.brim.wv.gov

Submitted by,

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