



## City of Westminster

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8200 Westminster Boulevard, Westminster, CA 92683 714.898.3311  
[www.westminster-ca.gov](http://www.westminster-ca.gov)

# STORM PREPAREDNESS GUIDE 2019



***GET READY, BE PREPARED***

## ***BE PERSONALLY PREPARED:***

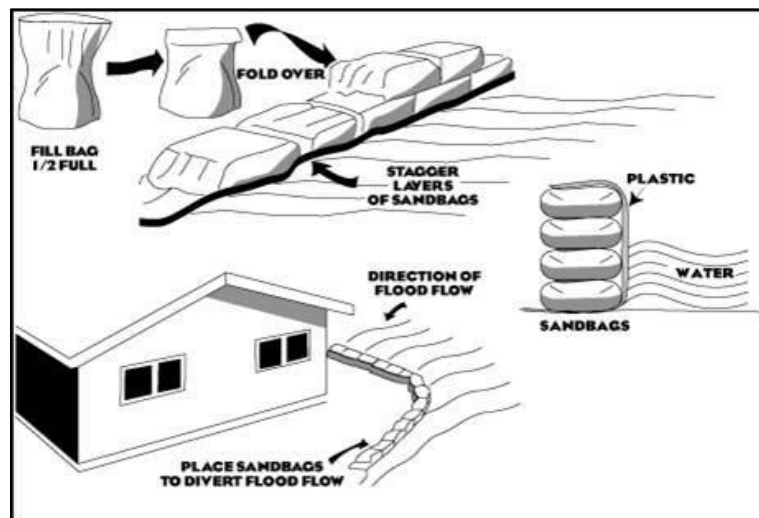
- When an emergency arises, time is often your worst enemy. You must be able to react in a quick, yet calm manner to minimize the adverse effects of an emergency situation.
- Preparation can be critical to being able to respond in a calm, effective manner during an emergency.
- Build a disaster supply kit. Keep a portable radio, emergency cooking equipment, and flashlights in working order, and keep extra batteries on hand. Stock up on emergency food, water and medicine so you don't have to go out during the storms. Don't forget about your pet's needs. Stock up on their food and medicine too and make sure their ID tags are up to date. Check on your elderly neighbors to see if they need any assistance with storm preparations
- Register your cell phone, email, and/or office number with the emergency alert system AlertOC. Every landline in the city is already automatically enrolled. By registering other numbers, you will receive emergency notices directly to your communication devices. Visit [www.alertoc.com](http://www.alertoc.com).
- Make sure you have access to important documents. Collect and safeguard critical documents. Store electronic copies of your most important documents on a password protected thumb drive, portable drive and/or in the "Cloud". Make sure it includes all records of critical identification documents, medical information, including where and how to get life-saving supplies and medications; financial and legal documents; and insurance information, as well as important phone numbers, instructions and email addresses.
- Know your local emergency phone numbers. Know the emergency plans for your children's school. Remember that local phone lines may be busy during a disaster, so designate a family member to contact outside of the area.
- Prepare an evacuation plan for your family. Learn the safest route from your home or place of business to high, safe ground if you should have to evacuate in a hurry.

## **PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR HEAVY RAIN:**

- **Use sand bags in areas known for flooding around your property**

Most home improvement stores have sand bags for sale. During inclement weather, sand bags are available to City of Westminster residents on a first-come, first-served basis. Sandbags are limited to 12 per resident and you must show identification.

**Westminster Municipal Corporation Yard  
14381 Olive Street  
Monday – Friday, 6:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Call (714) 895-2876 if you have any questions.**



- Park vehicles and put waste containers one foot away from the curb so storm water can flow unobstructed.
- Trim trees and landscaping as needed to ensure that branches and limbs are clear of your structure and clear from overhead power lines (Contact Southern California Edison at 1-800-655-4555 if trees have grown over or around power lines on your property).
- Secure outdoor furniture and other loose items from causing damage during periods of heavy winds.
- Make sure your yard does not have large bare areas which could be sources for mudflows during a storm. The fall is a good time to put down mulch and establish many native plants; it may be possible to vegetate these bare areas before the storm season.

- Visually inspect nearby storm drains, before the storm season and after every rain; if the storm drains are obstructed, clear the material from the drain or notify the Public Works Department at (714) 895-2876.
- Buy flood insurance if you live in a flood zone. You should contact your property/casualty agent or company about flood insurance, which is offered through the National Flood Insurance Program. Keep your insurance policies and a list of personal property in a safe place, such as a safe deposit box. Know the name, phone number, and location of the agent(s) who issued your policy.
- Make an itemized list of personal property. Photograph your home – inside and out. These will assist your insurance adjuster in settling claims and will help prove uninsured losses, which are tax deductible.
- Modify or remove any landings, sidewalks, driveways that are too high or slope towards the building. Drains can be installed in some cases.
- Inspect and repair roof covering, such as missing or cracked shingles and tiles. Inspect and repair flashing of roof, including valley flashing, vents and the chimney. Flashing prevents water from entering the building at any gaps or breaks. Clean roof gutters and down spouts. Inspect and repair any damage. Inspect and repair the chimney for any cracks caused by any previous earthquakes.
- Inspect and replace caulking that is loose or damaged around windows, doors, sliding glass doors, wall vents and other penetrations. Inspect weather seals around doors and make necessary adjustments, or replace. If wind can enter through these cracks, then wind driven rain can enter.
- Remove any objects that may block water from flowing away from the perimeter of the building. Remove items such as piles of wood and landscaping debris adjacent to exterior walls.
- Clean any lawn, landscaping or wood bark that may cover drain inlets.
- Clean underground patio drains, yard drains and retaining wall drains. Make sure the underground drain directs water towards the street.
- Inspect yard swales and remove any obstructions that would prevent water from draining to the street. Fences are often built across swales that prevent water from flowing to the street. Water must have a way of draining from buildings and towards the street.

- Remove any objects and debris that could be washed into the storm drain inlet. If the inlet becomes blocked, water could back up onto the property. Stock a small quantity of caulking & roof repair patch material for temporary emergency repair.

If you suspect damage could occur, keep a list of plumber's and repairmen's phone numbers in a handy location.

### ***DURING A FLOOD:***

Safety is the most important consideration. Since floodwaters can rise very rapidly, you should be prepared to evacuate before the water level reaches your property. Keep the following in mind:

- Have a Battery-Powered radio tuned to a local station, such as **KNX 1070**, and follow emergency instructions. Be prepared to evacuate if necessary.
- Be extremely cautious when driving. Do not attempt to drive through moving water. Follow all emergency traffic instructions.
- If you are caught in your home, office, or other areas by rising waters, move to the second floor or the roof as necessary. Take warm clothing, a flashlight, and a portable radio with you. Then wait for help don't try to swim to safety. Rescue teams will look for you.

### ***PRECAUTIONARY STEPS IF TIME PERMITS:***

- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation is likely. Do not touch any electrical equipment unless it is in a dry area and you are standing on a piece of dry wood while wearing rubber gloves and rubber-soled boots or shoes.
- Move valuables to upper floors or higher elevations.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case regular supplies are contaminated. You can sanitize these items by first rinsing with bleach.
- Bring outdoor possessions inside the house or tie them down securely. This includes lawn furniture, garbage cans, tools, signs, and other movable objects that might be swept away or hurled about.
- When outside the house, remember... floods are deceptive. Avoid flooded roads, and don't attempt to walk through floodwaters.

## ***IF SAFE TO EVACUATE BY CAR, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:***

- Stock the car with nonperishable foods (like canned goods), a plastic container of water, blankets, first aid kit, flashlights, dry clothing, and any special medication needed by your family.
- Keep the gas tank at least half full since gasoline pumps will not be working if the electricity is cut off.
- Do not drive where the water is over the roads. Parts of the road may already be washed out.
- If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it as soon as possible. Floodwaters can rise rapidly and sweep a car (and its occupants) away. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

## ***AFTER A FLOOD:***

- If your home or business has suffered flood damage, immediately call the agent or company who handles your flood insurance policy. The agent will then submit a loss form to the National Flood Insurance Program. An adjuster will be assigned to inspect your property as soon as possible.
- Prior to entering a building, check for structural damage. Make sure it is not in danger of collapsing. Turn off any outside gas lines at the meter or tank. If you smell gas, call your utility company immediately.
- Upon entering the building, do not use an open flame as a source of light since gas may still be trapped inside – use a battery-operated flashlight.
- Watch for downed electrical wires. Make certain that the main power switch is turned off. Do not turn on any lights or appliances until an electrician has checked the system for short circuits.
- Cover broken windows and holes in the roof or walls to prevent further weather damage.
- Proceed with immediate clean-up measures to prevent any health hazards. Perishable items pose a health problem and should be listed and photographed before discarding. Throw out fresh food and medicines that have come in contact with flood waters.
- Water for drinking and food preparation should be used only if the public water system has been declared safe. In an emergency, water may be obtained by draining a hot water tank or melting ice cubes.

- Take pictures of the damage to your building and contents. Refrigerators, sofas and other hard goods should be hosed off and kept for the adjuster's inspection. Use a household cleanser to clean items to be kept. Any partially damaged items should be dried and aired; the adjuster will make recommendations as to repair or disposal.
- Take all wooden furniture outdoors to dry, but keep it out of direct sunlight to prevent warping. A garage or carport is a good place for drying. Remove drawers and other moving parts as soon as possible, but do not pry open swollen drawers from the front. Instead, remove the backing and push the drawers out.
- Shovel out mud while it is still moist to give walls and floors a chance to dry. Place mud on lawn and not in the gutter. Once plastered walls have dried, brush off loose dirt. Wash with household cleanser and rinse with clean water; always start at the bottom and work up. Ceilings are done last. Special attention must also be paid to cleaning out heating ducts and plumbing systems.
- Mildew can be removed from dry wood with a solution of 1 cup liquid chlorine bleach, in 1 gallon of water.
- Clean metal at once then wipe with a kerosene-soaked cloth. A light coat of oil will prevent iron from rusting. Scour all utensils, and, if necessary, use fine steel wool on unpolished surfaces. Aluminum may be brightened by scrubbing with a solution of vinegar, cream of tartar, and hot water.
- Clothing or household fabrics should be allowed to dry (slowly, away from direct heat) before brushing off loose dirt. If you cannot get a professional cleaner, rinse the items in lukewarm water to remove lodged soil. Then wash with mild detergent; rinse and dry in sunlight.
- Drain and clean flooded basements carefully. Structural damage will occur if water is pumped out too quickly. After the floodwaters around your property have subsided, begin draining the basement in stages, about one-third of the water volume each day.

***ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION:***

[www.ReadyOC.org](http://www.ReadyOC.org)

[www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov)

[www.AlertOC.com](http://www.AlertOC.com)