

FLOOD

GUIDE
IN CASE OF FLOOD



RCB

Rządowe Centrum
Bezpieczeństwa

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Composition and implementation
GOVERNMENT CENTRE FOR SECURITY



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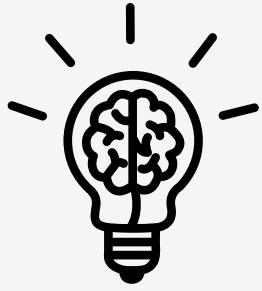
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1. INTRODUCTION



Flooding is one of **the most dangerous and devastating** natural disasters. It poses a threat to life and health and often causes significant material damage

Several factors can help minimize damage: proper preparation, monitoring the situation, quick action, and following the instructions of emergency services.

- How can you effectively **prepare for** a flood?
- How can you **protect** yourself and your family?
- What should you do **when the water recedes**?

You will find the answers in this guide.

What is a flood?

A flood is a phenomenon in which a large amount of water submerges vast areas – often as a result of rivers, lakes, or seas overflowing. It can be caused by heavy rainfall, snowmelt, storms, or the failure of dams.



Flood or inundation?

Flood

It usually affects large areas, causing significant material damage and posing a threat to the lives of people and animals. It can be sudden and short-lived (flash floods are typical for mountainous areas) or last for an extended period.

Inundation

It is a local inundation that is less intense than a flood and mainly affects smaller areas, such as homes, basements, or small properties. It is usually a short-lived phenomenon caused by a sudden, but modest rise in water levels, for example, after heavy rainfall.

Who is at risk of the effects of flooding?

All of us.

Given the diverse nature of floods, they can occur in areas near rivers, seas, lakes, as well as in mountainous regions or in the center of a large city.



Causes of flooding

The causes of flooding can be either natural or related to human activity.

Natural factors include:

- **heavy rainfall** – prolonged or short-term (torrential) rains;
- **rapid snowmelt** – spring thawing (especially when it occurs quickly) can lead to a sudden rise in water levels in rivers and streams. Additionally, heavy rainfall increases the risk of flooding;
- **river blockages** – ice formations or a large number of natural obstacles (e.g., stones) can further obstruct the flow of water, causing rivers to overflow onto surrounding areas;
- **storms** – strong winds in bays and coastal areas can push water from the Baltic Sea into rivers, causing a phenomenon known as storm surge.



Human-related factors include, among others:

- **damage to a dam** – intentional or accidental;
- **improper maintenance of flood barriers** (or lack thereof);
- **lack of maintenance of the floodplain** – leaving too many shrubs or trees, which during a flood can significantly raise water levels.

Floodplain - the area located along the riverbank, between the shoreline and the flood barrier



Effects of flooding

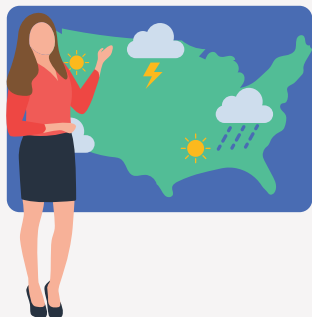
The most severe effects of flooding include:

- fatalities;
- injuries (to humans and animals);
- material damage:
 - destruction of buildings;
 - loss of agricultural assets (damage to crops, destruction of livestock);
 - loss of property – e.g., cars, electronic equipment, furniture.



How to recognize flood hazards

Flood risk can be recognized in several ways:



Monitoring weather forecasts – heavy rainfall, rapid snowmelt, or storms can lead to flooding. Meteorological services (IMGW) typically issue warnings based on such forecasts.



Observing rivers and water reservoirs – monitoring water levels in rivers, canals, and reservoirs is an important indicator of potential flood risk. Exceeding warning and alarm levels indicates the risk of flooding.



Local warnings – it is important to pay attention to the alerts issued by local authorities, the Government Centre for Security and the media.

2. BEFORE THE FLOOD

Gain knowledge

First and foremost, **assess the potential flood risk** for your area of residence.

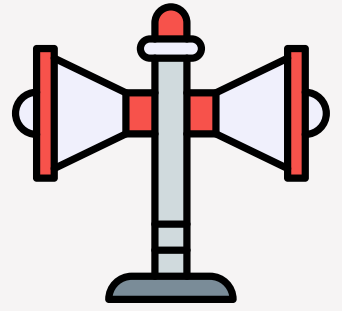
You can find information about whether you live in a flood-prone area on the following website

 <https://mapy.isok.gov.pl>



If you live in a flood-prone area:

- **Familiarize yourself with the local flood warning system** – find out how it works and what alarm signals are used in case of a flood threat, such as sirens, church bells, or radio announcements.



- **Learn more about flooding** – visit websites with relevant information (their addresses can be found on page 31).



- **Educate your close family members:**
 - Make sure that all family members (especially children) know what to do in the event of a flood;
 - Teach them how to disconnect access to electricity, gas, and water in case of flooding;
 - Create a 'Family Flood Plan' together (a template can be downloaded HERE).



Prepare an evacuation plan

Find out:

- **how** evacuation of people and animals is organized in your area;
- **who** will carry out the evacuation;
- **where** the evacuation routes and designated evacuation points for people are located;
- **where** designated places for animals, vehicles, agricultural machinery, and other property are located.



Where to obtain information about behavior during a flood?

The best sources of knowledge about behavior during a potential flood (real danger, evacuation methods, warning systems) are:

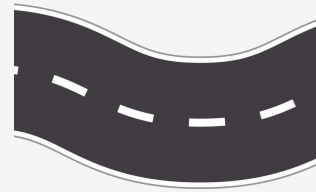
- **local authorities** – the municipal or city office;
- **municipal crisis management teams;**
- **the experiences** of family members and people living nearby.

Plan your own evacuation:

- **Designate the safest evacuation routes from your home** – routes that will allow you to reach evacuation points quickly and safely;

- **Establish with your family:**

- evacuation routes;



- ways of communication;



- meeting place in case of separation (must not be located in a flood-prone area).



What to do to prepare for a flood and minimize damage?

- **Insure your property** – purchase a policy that covers both property and belongings, including flood damage.
- **Monitor weather forecasts** – regularly check local weather forecasts and reports from local media, especially during periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt.
- **Pay attention to water levels** – if you live in a low-lying area or near a river, stream, or water reservoir, monitor the water levels during heavy rainfall.



Valuable items, documents and food

- **Secure documents and valuables** – store important documents in waterproof containers or safes, such as property deeds, passports, ID cards, insurance policies, and other essential documents. If possible, move valuable items to higher floors.



- **Make backup copies** – back up digital documents and data storage devices. Keep copies in the cloud or on external drives stored in a safe place.



- **Stock up on non-perishable food and water** at home.



Evacuation backpack

Complete evacuation backpack – pack basic articles in case of evacuation.



Bądź gotowy!
Przygotuj plecak ewakuacyjny na sytuację kryzysową

RCB
Norway grants

				
radio na baterie + baterie	latarka + baterie	najpotrzebniejsze dokumenty	zapałniczka /zapałki	maski oddechowe /ochronne
				
mapa z lokalnymi drogami, kompas, busola, GPS	otwieracz do puszek	posiłki na 2 dni	nóż, ołówek i notes	komplet sztućców
				
kurtka przeciwdeszczowa	apteczka	śpiwór	woraki na śmieci	ubranie na zmianę
				
mydło, żel do dezynfekcji	kobinerki, łom, narzędzie wielofunkcyjne	gotówkę w niewielkich nominałach	butelkę filtrującą z nowym filtrem	gumy, sznurki, opaska zaciskowa

A checklist of **essential items** that may be useful during a flood emergency is available [HERE](#).

Prepare your home for flood risk

- Install **check valves in sewage drains** to prevent the waste water from receding.
- Install **special seals on doors and windows** that can help reduce the risk of leaks.
- Consider **buying bags and sand** or other materials to seal the entrances to the building.
- Keep **the water drainage system from the roof in good condition** (for example, gutters).
- Check **the patency of the sewer grilles** and remove, for example, residual leaves.



Flood embankments

Flood embankments are a key building protecting against flooding. **Do not weaken their structure!**

Remember that it is forbidden:

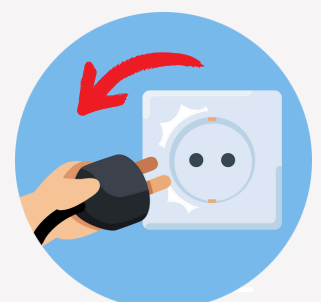
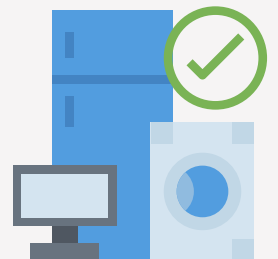
- passing through the shafts (except for designated areas);
- growing land directly at the shafts;
- planting trees on the shafts;
- construction of buildings, digging wells, ponds, pits and ditches at a distance of less than 50 m from the base of the shafts.



3. IF YOU RECEIVE A FLOOD WARNING

Safe behavior at home

- **Follow official announcements** on radio, television, and the internet to stay up to date on threat information and how to proceed.
- **Take care of the family** - make sure that everyone (especially children) knows what to do in the event of a flood, remind the established ways of contact and escape routes.
- **Keep your mobile phone with you** and try to keep the battery charged.
- **Secure electrical devices** - move them to higher floors or set them on elevations.
- **Disable media** - disconnect gas and electricity installation, close the water supply, secure the sewerage network or septic tank.



Prepare for evacuation

- If this has not been done before, **pack an evacuation backpack;** (more information on the [p. 16](#))
- **Move valuable items** to a safe place or to the upper floors of the building;
- **Prepare to take:**
 - medicaments;
 - identity cards (including birth certificates);
 - valuables;
 - money and securities;
 - documents relating to the house and the land owned;
 - documentation of business activity;
 - insurance policies;

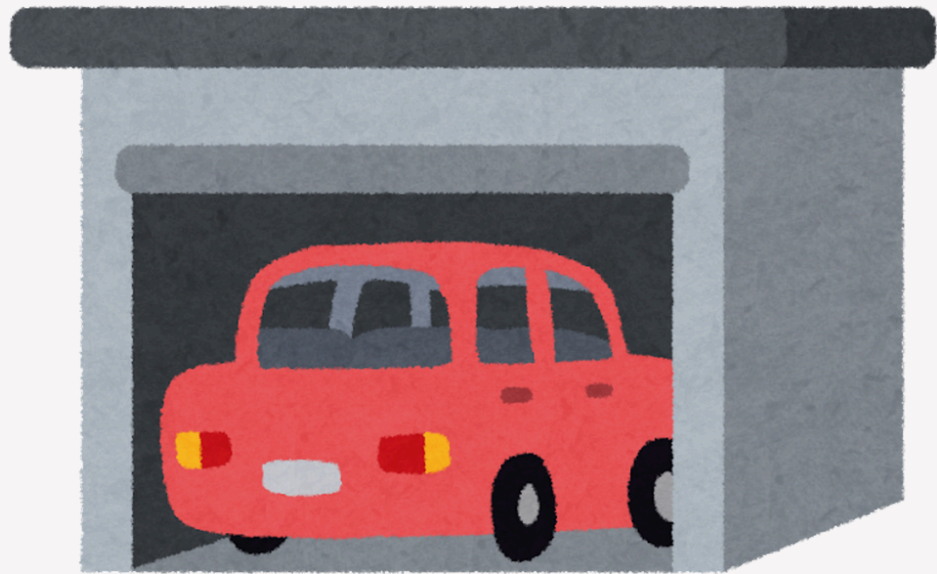


- **Secure the buildings and prepare sandbags.**



Secure your vehicles

- **Move them** where the risk of flooding is lower.
- **If you have a garage**, make sure it is tightly closed and protected from water.
- If you are unable to evacuate the vehicle, **disconnect the battery** to avoid the risk of short circuit or damage to the electrical system.



In case of a health or life emergency, call the emergency number 112!

On the farm

- **Move the animal feed to** a place not threatened with flooding and prepare its supply for three days.
- Gather additional **supplies of water for animals**.
- **Prepare livestock for evacuation** – it is more difficult than humans and takes more time.
- **Talk to your neighbors about mutual assistance** in loading livestock for evacuation.
- **Move vehicles and agricultural machinery** to areas not threatened by flooding.
- **Protect hazardous substances** – fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, paints, varnishes, solvents and other chemicals.



4. DURING A FLOOD

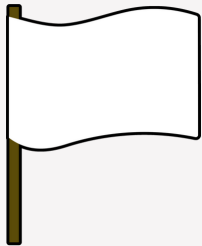
If you are at home

- **Stay on the upper floors of the building.**
- **Turn on the battery-powered radio at the frequency of the local station** for the latest information on the situation and how to proceed.
- **Do not touch wet electrical appliances** - this threatens with electric shock.
- **Avoid contact with flood water and do not use wells** – water may be contaminated with chemicals, sewage or other dangerous substances, including pathogenic bacteria.
- **Prepare for a possible evacuation** – have at hand the necessary things, including an evacuation backpack.



How to call for help

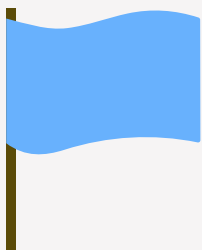
If you need help, hang a flag or piece of fabric in the following color:



WHITE
Evacuation requirement

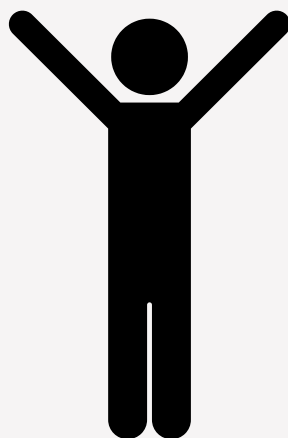


RED
Need for medical attention



BLUE
The need for food and water

or send a message to the helicopter crew
like this:



YES
help needed



NO
we don't need any help

How evacuation should proceed

- In case of a decision to leave the house issued by the services, **do it immediately!**
- **Do not stay in flooded area** – is a huge risk. In addition to the immediate threat of drowning, among others: infectious diseases, lack of electricity, water and sewage. You may also not get medical help on time - services may have difficulty getting there.
- **Do not be guided by the need to protect property from theft.** The area will be secured by the services.



Remember!
Always follow the instructions
of the emergency services!

- **Before leaving home:**

- **Turn off** all electrical and gas installations.
- **Attach the children to their clothes cards** with their name and contact to the caregiver. Protect the cards properly so that they do not destroy and do not unfasten.
- When leaving home, **take an evacuation backpack with you.**

After the evacuation, register at the registration point - this way your family will find you more easily.



What to do if you are outside

- **Avoid low-lying areas** – such as river valleys, places under bridges.
- In case of danger, **immediately move to the higher ground.**
- **Do not enter flooded areas** – even a several-centimeter stream of water can overturn a person, and cars can be immobilized.



If you have to cross a flooded area, choose a place without a strong current.

If you are in a car

- If you are approaching a sunken road, **turn around and find an alternative route.**
- **If your car breaks down,** get out of it immediately and go to higher ground.



Staying in the car during a rush is dangerous.
Most cars can be carried by water.



5. AFTER THE FLOOD

Returning home

- **Before you come back, check if it is safe** – listen to radio and television messages, do not go home until the authorities announce, that it is safe.
- **Before you enter the house, make sure that the building is stable and does not threaten to collapse** – check the foundations and walls of the house for cracks or other damage. In case of doubt, report it for construction supervision and local authorities.
- **Do not turn on the electrical and gas installation** without specialized help – water may be in the gaps and sockets.
- Check **the plumbing system**.



Health - precautions

- **Avoid contact with water** until it is removed - **it may be contaminated**. If you must come into contact with flood water, wear protective gloves and waterproof shoes.
- If you have had contact with flood water or have any symptoms of the disease - **contact your doctor**.
- **Throw away** all food that has come into contact with flood water.

Insurance and benefit

- **Document** all damages with photos or videos and contact your **insurer**.
- If you need it, apply for **financial assistance** to a municipal or city social welfare center. **The allowance** is intended to cover the costs of purchasing food, medicines, fuel, clothing, necessary household items.



Cleaning and renovation

- **Remove the water and dry the house** – as soon as possible remove the water and dry the interior of the building to prevent the development of mold.
- **Open all windows and doors**, start heating or use portable heating devices.
- **Disinfect, ventilate, dry and repaint** flooded rooms (especially if you store food in them, prepare meals or if there are children in them).
- Remove all elements that **retain moisture** and make it difficult to dry rooms.
- **Move the furniture** away from the walls to at least 20 cm and lift a minimum of 5 cm from the floor.



If possible, get involved in helping others remove the effects of the flood.

6. USEFUL CONTACTS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Emergency numbers

Emergency number - 112

Watertrain Ambulance - 994

Heat Rescue - 993

Gas Ambulance - 992

Energy Ambulance - 991



Sources of information on flood and meteorological situations



Government portal – flood protection
www.powodz.gov.pl



Państwowe
Gospodarstwo Wodne
Wody Polskie

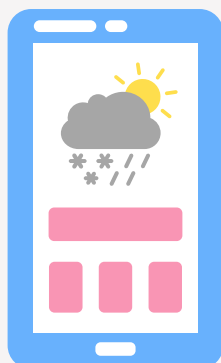
State Water Holding Polish Waters



Government Centre for Security



Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (IMGW)



Regional weather portals and mobile applications with weather alerts

RCCB

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