

Floods: Watch, Warnings, Strike, Aftermath

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters. Some floods develop over a period of days, but flash floods can result in raging waters in just a few minutes. Flooding can occur during any season of the year. Because so much of the land is low, your property may be in a Special Flood Hazard Area as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The principle source of floodwater in the parish is rain. In the late summer, hurricanes and their tidal surges also pose a serious threat.

Floodwater collects because most of Jefferson Parish lies at or below sea level with land prone to subsidence or sinking. The low, flat ground provides little gravity drainage so water that falls in Jefferson Parish must be pumped out.

Hurricane protection levees have been built to protect life and property from storm surge. These levees do a very good job protecting communities during minimal hurricanes. However, sophisticated computer modeling of storm surge effects indicates most levees in Southeast Louisiana would be overtopped from the storm surge generated by a direct strike of a major hurricane, resulting in widespread flooding.

A potential catastrophic hurricane for Southeast Louisiana is defined as a Category 3-Slow (average 5mph forward speed) and all Category 4 or 5 hurricanes. Hurricanes in Categories 1, 2 and fast-moving 3 (average 15mph forward speed), are considered less destructive and dealt with through the use of normal emergency preparedness procedures.

FLOOD ADVISORY TERMS

ADVISORY	DESCRIPTION
FLOOD WATCH	Flooding is possible.
FLASH FLOOD WATCH	A flash flood, which can happen very fast with little warning, is possible.
FLOOD WARNING	A flood is occurring or will occur soon; the flood may take several hours to develop.
FLASH FLOOD WARNING	A flash flood is occurring or will happen very soon; you should find safety immediately.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
City of Kenner Office of Emergency Management (504) 471-2100
OEM@KENNER.LA.US

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WHEN FLOODING IS PREDICTED FOR YOUR AREA

- Check TV and radio often for official bulletins.
- Fuel car.
- Check mobile home tie downs.
- Adjust moorings on watercraft or move to safer shelter.
- Stock up on canned provisions.
- Check supplies of special medicines and drugs.
- Check batteries for radio and flashlights.
- Secure lawn furniture and other loose material outdoors.
- Elevate lawn equipment and machinery.
- Inventory flood protection supplies and equipment.
- Plan a place to meet in case you and your family are separated.
- Have an evacuation plan - know how to get to high ground fast.

WHEN A FLOOD WARNING IS ISSUED

- Stay tuned to TV and radio for official bulletins.
- Move valuables to upper floors or attic.
- Raise appliances above predicted flood levels.
- Bring in pets.
- Fill containers with several days supply of drinking water.
- Use the phone only for emergencies.
- Implement a flood protection plan (sandbagging, wrapping, closing levee gaps).
- Monitor local storm drains and clear debris to facilitate runoff.
- Clean out storm drains and sewers.

When a flood threatens your area, you will have to make the decision to either evacuate or stay safely at home.

IF LOCAL AUTHORITIES RECOMMEND EVACUATION, YOU SHOULD LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!

- Shut off water and electricity at main source and lock up.
- Take small valuables and papers, but travel light.
- Provide for animals and pets that shelters will not take.
- Use recommended evacuation routes. Do not drive through standing or flowing water and barricaded streets.

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DURING THE FLOOD EVENT

USE EXTREME CAUTION!

- Stay tuned to the TV and radio for information and official instructions.
- Stay out of disaster areas.
- Do not drink tap water until it has been determined to be safe.
- Do not attempt to travel until roads have been declared open.
- Drive carefully along debris-filled streets. Roads may be under mined and may collapse under weight.
- Stay clear of any downed or low hanging power lines and report them to the power company.
- Report broken sewers or water mains to the water department.
- Be exceptionally careful to prevent fires: lower water pressure may make fire fighting difficult.
- Do not use the telephone except for emergencies.
- Check with neighbors to see if help is needed.
- When cooking without gas or electricity, good ventilation is extremely important. Bottled gas burners or several candles taped together are safe and efficient. The use of portable grills is strongly discouraged. NEVER burn charcoal indoors. Always have a fire extinguisher handy.

RETURNING TO YOUR FLOOD DAMAGED HOME

USE EXTREME CAUTION!

- Before entering a damaged building, check for structural damage and possible imminent collapse.
- When entering a damaged building, do not use an open flame as a light source.
- Be sure children are safe and in good hands.
- Keep chemicals used for disinfecting and poisons used for insect and rodent control out of the reach of children.
- Wear protective clothing and rubber gloves when cleaning.
- Disconnect main electrical switches and circuits. Remove covers from all outlets and fuses or multi-breaker boxes. When dry, spray outlets and boxes with contact cleaner/lubricant.
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage if power has been off during the event.
- Assume that water supplies are contaminated.

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