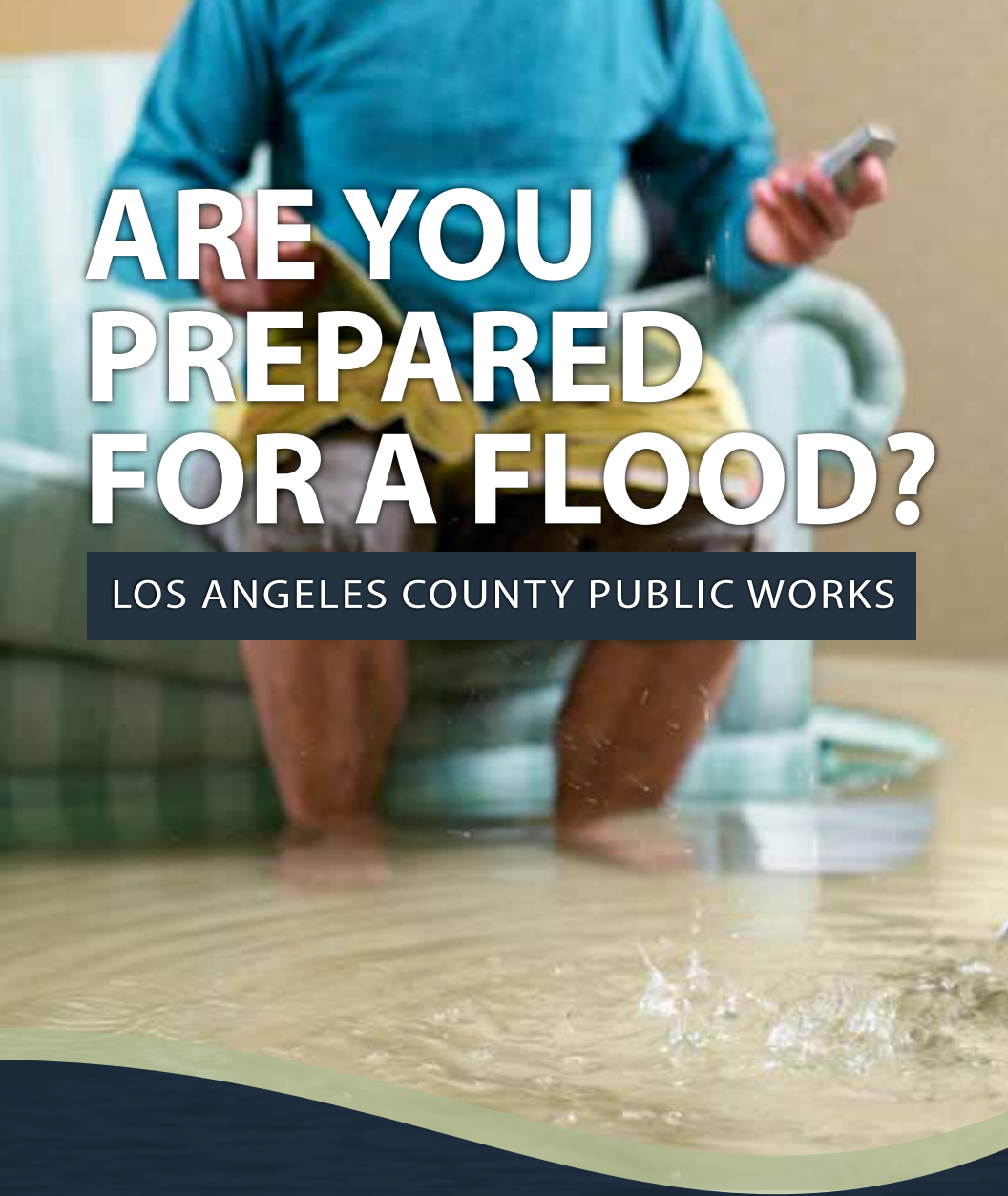

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FLOOD?

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S FLOODING HISTORY:

Since 1975, Los Angeles County has experienced twelve federally, declared flood disasters, with three of those disasters coming under El Niño conditions (1983, 1998, 2010) and two under La Niña conditions (1988, 1995). Many of these resulted in significant flood damages to residential properties. During the 1997-1998 El Nino season, nearly 300 drainage complaints were documented with approximately 400 flood insurance claims filed. Being prepared is your best defense against such events.

POTENTIAL FLOODING LOCATIONS:

You have received this guide because the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) have identified one or more of your properties as being subject to flooding due to:

- Being located in or near a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), according to FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (refer to page 4).
- Being identified as a Repetitive Loss Property with more than one flood insurance claim of at least $1, 000 within a 10-year period.
- Being located near a Repetitive Loss Property and likely subject to similar flooding.

Historically, flooding has occurred in Lancaster, Malibou Lake, Quartz Hill, Rowland Heights, and the San Gabriel and Santa Monica mountains. Properties in these areas are near steep hillsides where rainwater runs off quickly flooding areas along the hillside. Other properties are near a stream or lake where rainwater tends to run off quickly resulting in flooding of the adjacent areas.

To identify your property's flood risk, Public Works provides flood zone determinations through the flood zone hotline **(626) 458-4321** and the flood zone determination website at: **pw.lacounty.gov/floodzone/** FEMA maps are also available online and at County public libraries.

FLOOD ZONE INFORMATION:

FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps show the Special Flood Hazard Area, which is subject to the base flood (base flood – having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year) and other flood areas. The maps also show base flood elevations, the anticipated water surface elevation for the base flood. Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area with a federally backed mortgage require flood insurance as a condition of the loan.

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps are available at: **msc.fema.gov**.

Special Flood Hazard Areas	
ZONE A	No base flood elevations determined.
ZONE AE	Base flood elevations determined.
ZONE AH	Base flood elevations are determined for flood depths of 1 to 3 feet (usually areas of ponding).
ZONE AO	Average depths are determined for flood depths of 1 to 3 feet (usually sheet flow on sloping terrain). Velocities are determined for areas with funneled sediment flooding.

Other Flood Areas	
ZONE X (shaded)	Areas of 0.2% annual chance flood; areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood.
ZONE X (unshaded)	Areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain.
ZONE D	Areas in which flood hazards are undetermined, but possible.

PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE FOR PROTECTION:

Los Angeles County has been a NFIP participant since December 1980, making flood insurance available to all County unincorporated area residents. You can purchase a flood insurance policy from most insurance agencies.

More than 25 percent of flood insurance claims occur outside of Special Flood Hazard Areas. Homeowner's insurance rarely covers flood damage. In most cases, property owners must purchase flood insurance to protect against damage caused by flooding.

Renters may also purchase flood insurance.

The cost of your flood insurance policy will depend on factors that include, but are not limited to the type of property, level of flood risk, and amount of coverage selected. Coverage can also be purchased for the contents of the building. Elevation certificates may provide a discount on your flood insurance policy. Visit: **pw.lacounty.gov/wmd/nfip/ec** for more information on elevation certificates.

Contact your insurance agent for more information.

Also, see the Resources Quick Guide section for additional resources.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO BEFORE A FLOOD?

- Purchase flood insurance (note there is a 30-day waiting period before, coverage goes into effect).
- Understand and be aware of your property's flood risk.
- Research flood mitigation information.
- Prepare a family emergency response plan.
- Prepare your home for floods.
- Make disaster kits.
- Register your cell phone number and/or e-mail with Alert LA County at **alert.lacounty.gov** for automated notification in emergencies**.**
- Request Public Works mud flow advice by calling **(800) 933-0930** if your home is located within a recently burned watershed.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO DURING A FLOOD?

Flood warnings are issued to the community through the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and Alert LA County. EAS messages are broadcasted by the Sheriff's Department through public radio and television stations. Alert LA County uses a Community Mass Notification System that contacts residents and businesses by recorded phone messages, text messages and e-mail. During a flood you should do the following:

- Listen to radio and TV emergency broadcast announcements.
- Follow instructions from emergency and local officials.
- Initiate your family's emergency response plan.
- Turn off the electricity and gas.
- Report interrupted service to local utility companies.
- Stay out of flood control channels.
- Do not drive, walk or swim through moving water.
- Avoid low-lying areas; seek shelter in the highest areas possible.
- If you are in danger, call 911 for assistance.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AFTER A FLOOD?

- Listen to radio and TV for emergency instructions.
- Call utility companies to restore service.
- Dispose of flood contaminated supplies.
- Boil tap water until local officials indicate it is safe to drink.
- Avoid disaster areas.
- Stay away from electrical equipment in wet areas.
- Avoid driving if possible.
- Do not use open flame devices.
- Obtain permit for property damage repairs.
- Hire licensed and insured contractors.
- Report any suspected permit violations.

FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES FOR YOUR PROPERTY:

- Elevate structure above flood waters.
- Floodproof structure to limit water intrusion.
- Deflect flood waters with temporary devices (i.e. sandbags, which are available at County fire stations; fill sandbags with native soil or purchase sand at local home improvement stores).
- Clear drainage paths on your property.
- Report illegal dumping and obstructions in drainage channels by calling **(888) CLEANLA**.
- Seal doors and windows.
- Move valuables and furniture to higher areas of the home.
- Install permanent drainage devices (i.e., french drains).
- Control erosion with plantings, grading and drains.

CODE COMPLIANCE FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS:

Substantial improvements are defined as enhancements which cost at least 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the improvement is made. Substantial damage is defined as damage to a structure where the cost of restoring it to its prior condition would cost at least 50 percent of its market value before the damage.

Structures determined to be substantially damaged are automatically considered substantial improvements. Projects involving substantial improvements must meet applicable NFIP requirements for new buildings, such as elevating the structure above the flood waters.

BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS OF FLOODPLAINS:

Floodplains are a natural component of the Los Angeles County environment. When flooding spreads out across the floodplain, its energy is dissipated. This results in lower flood flows downstream, reduced erosion of the streambank and channel, deposition of sediments higher in the watershed and improved groundwater recharge.

Floodplains are scenic, valued wildlife habitats, and blend with the natural environment. Poorly planned development in floodplains can lead to streambank erosion, loss of valuable property, increased risk of flooding to downstream properties, degradation of water quality and decreased quality of life.

Protecting the natural functions of floodplains will help reduce flood damage and extend the natural resources for years to come.

AVAILABLE FLOOD PROTECTION PUBLICATIONS AT DESIGNATED COUNTY LIBRARIES

Visit County libraries or the Public Works National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) website to review the documents below.

See the following Resources Quick Guide section for library web addresses and other related information.

- FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps are available at: **msc.fema.gov**.
- FEMA-15 (12/81) *Design Guideline for Flood Drainage Reduction.*
- FEMA-54 (3/84) *Elevated Residential Structures.*
- FEMA-85 (11/09) *Protecting Manufactured Homes from Floods and Other Hazards.*
- FEMA-100 (3/86) *A Unified National Program for Floodplain Management*.
- FEMA-165 (5/89) *Alluvial Fans Hazards and Management.*
- FEMA-F-084 (3/11) *Answers to Questions About the National Flood Insurance Program.*
- FEMA-309 (1996) *Addressing Your Community's Flood Problems.*
- FEMA-312 (6/14) *Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting.*

AVAILABLE FLOOD PROTECTION PUBLICATIONS AT DESIGNATED COUNTY LIBRARIES (CONT.)

- Additional FEMA resources available for download at **fema.gov/library**
- Homeowner's Guide for Flood, Debris, and Erosion Control (available at **pw.lacounty.gov/wmd/HomeOwners/**).
- Be Flood Aware, published by Public Works.
- Homeowner's Guide to Fire and Watershed Safety at the Chaparral/Urban Interface, (by the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County of Los Angeles Fire Department).
- Floodplain Management Plan by Public Works (adopted by the LA County Board of Supervisors on March 17, 2026).
- Floodplain Management Association (documents and references at **floodplain.org/page/Docs-Links**).
- For monthly tips and advice on emergency survival for all recognized local hazards, visit the County's Emergency Survival Program (ESP) at **ready.lacounty.gov/emergency-survival-guide**.

RESOURCES QUICK GUIDE:

Flood Protection Information Available at these Libraries:

Castaic Library
27971 Sloan Rd
Castaic, CA 91384
(661) 257-7410

Topanga Library
122 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Topanga, CA 90290
(310) 455-3480

Altadena Library
600 East Mariposa Steet
Altadena, CA 91001
(626) 798-0833

Malibu Library
23519 W. Civic Center Way
Malibu, CA 90265
(310) 456-6438

San Dimas Library
145 N. Walnut Ave
San Dimas, CA 91773
(909) 599-6738

Duarte Library
1301 Buena Vista St.
Duarte, CA 91010
(626) 358-1865

Rosemead Library
8800 Valley Blvd.
Rosemead, CA 91770
(626) 573-5220

For updated list of additional libraries, please check the website at **pw.lacounty.gov/nfip/libraries.pdf**

Resource Websites:

Public Works NFIP Website
pw.lacounty.gov/wmd/nfip/

Coordinated Agency Recovery Effort (CARE)
lacounty.gov/larain

Chief Executive Office Emergency Survival Program (ESP)
ceo.lacounty.gov/emergency-management

Alert LA County
alert.lacounty.gov

FEMA Elevation Certificate Form and Instructions
fema.gov/fact-sheet/understanding-elevation-certificates

FEMA FIRM Maps
msc.fema.gov

FEMA NFIP Website
fema.gov

The National Flood Insurance Program
fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program

Contractors State License Board
cslb.ca.gov

Ready Campaign
ready.gov

Disaster Assistance
disasterassistance.gov

RESOURCES QUICK GUIDE:

Telephone Numbers:

Public Works Flood Zone Hotline	(626) 458-4321
Public Works Building and Safety Division	(626) 458-3173
Public Works Mud Flow Advice	(800) 933-0930
Public Works Illegal Dumping Hotline	(888) CLEANLA
National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	(800) 621-FEMA
Emergency Survival Program (ESP)	(323) 980-2260
NFIP Referral Call Center	(888) 379-9531
State Contractors and License Information	(800) 321-2752

This information is provided by the County of Los Angeles and is applicable only to properties within the limits of the County. This guide was prepared to educate you about the flood hazards and the things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property from floods.

For more information, visit the County's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Emergency Survival Program and as well as other coordinated agency response effort websites.

Los Angeles County Public Works
Alhambra, CA 91803-1331

For additional resources
please scan QR code.