



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
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Snow + Frozen Ground = Flooding Threat???

In April 2013, we saw historic flooding across West Michigan. Road closures, house and building evacuations, and water rescues kept first responders busy. Floodwaters caused millions of dollars in property damage. Winter 2014 has brought substantial snowfall totals, so there is concern for the potential for flooding, and some forecasters and hydrologists say it could be worse than last year. The Kent County Emergency Management Team urges you to be prepared.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: When disasters strike, people are sometimes left with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Back-up your computer files and operating systems. Keep copies, both electronic and hardcopy, of insurance and financial records, as well as medical and prescription information. Protect important documents and keepsakes. Try to keep many important documents in a place where they are easy to grab if you need to leave in a hurry. Social security cards, birth, marriage and death certificates, immunization records, insurance policies, wills, contracts, vehicle titles and property deeds, as well as a bank statement, could all be needed during an emergency.

Keep your home and car emergency kits stocked. You should have the following items in your household emergency kit: a flashlight, extra batteries, a fire extinguisher, a battery-powered radio, cash (or traveler's checks, in case electricity is down and businesses can't take credit cards), a first aid kit, matches in a waterproof container, napkins, paper cups, plates, plastic, a shut-off wrench (to turn off household utensils), a can opener, water (one gallon per person per day; you should have at least three days on standby) and non-perishable foods.

CREATE AND SHARE YOUR PLAN: Take a few minutes to talk with your family about a disaster plan. You should have two places to meet after a disaster. One should be right outside your home, in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. The other should be outside your neighborhood, in case you can't return home or are asked to evacuate the area. Share your plan with a friend or relative that lives outside of the area where you live. This family contact may be easier to contact, and can help get messages between family members. Discuss, in advance, how to take care of your pets.

NAVIGATING DURING FLOODING: Stay away from floodwaters – on foot, or in a car. Never drive around a barricade or through a flooded road. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. Often, floodwaters carry debris that may not be visible from the surface, and water may contain dangerous chemicals, or bacteria like E coli. The water may also have a swift current that will pull you in. Use extra caution when driving at night, as it might be more difficult to see flood dangers.

For more emergency preparedness advice, or, to become a volunteer during disaster, go to www.BeMittenReady.com today.