

# NORTH PLAINFIELD

## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Lawrence La Ronde - Mayor

James DiPaolo - Coordinator

Dear Resident,

You are receiving this letter because your property lies in an area of North Plainfield that has sustained several flood losses. During heavy periods of rain, drainage systems, creeks and brooks become inundated and flow over their banks into our streets and properties. The Borough of North Plainfield sits below the Watchung Mountains also leaving us vulnerable to flash flooding from storm water runoff from municipalities situated at slightly higher elevations. This leaves your area with the potential to flood every year.

The Borough of North Plainfield is concerned about repetitive flooding and has an active program to provide you with information to help you protect yourself and your property from future flooding and loss. The Green Brook Flood Control Commission continually seeks funding for the flood control project to eventually alleviate flooding in our area.

Meanwhile here are some things that you can do:

Check with the Office of Emergency Management on the extent of past flooding in your area. Here you can find out about the causes of repetitive flooding, what is being done about it and what would be an appropriate flood protection level. A representative can visit your property to discuss protection alternatives.

Prepare for flooding by doing the following:

- Know the flood safety guidance on the last page of this letter.
- Know how to safely shut off the electricity and gas to your home before flooding begins.
- Make a list of emergency numbers and identify a safe place to go for you and your pets. Make a household inventory, especially of basement contents (consult insurance provider).
- Place insurance policies, valuable papers, medicines, ect. in a safe place. Develop a disaster response plan and prepare, <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/make-a-plan.html>
- Visit: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html> to learn how to prepare for emergencies.
- Visit: <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/20-Red-Cross-Safety-Steps-for-Returning-Home-After-the-Flood.html> for safety steps for returning home after a flood.

Consider some permanent flood protection measures:

- Mark your electrical box to show circuits to the floodable areas of your home, turning off power to the basement can reduce property damage and save lives.
- Check your building for water entry points. These can be basement windows, doors, stairwells and dryer vents.
- Install a floor drain plug or sewer backup valve to prevent sewer backup flooding. More information can be found in “Homeowners Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your House From Flooding”. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/FEMA\\_P-312.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/FEMA_P-312.pdf)

Note that some flood protection measures may need a building permit and others may not be safe for your type of building, so be sure to speak with the Construction Department staff.

- Get a flood insurance policy Homeowner’s insurance policies do not cover damage from floods; however, because North Plainfield participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the Federal Government and is available to everyone, even properties that have been flooded.

Because North Plainfield participates in the Community Rating System, you will receive a reduction in the insurance premium.

Flood insurance policies will help pay for repairs after a flood and, in some cases, it will help pay for the costs of elevating a substantially damaged building.

If your property is not mapped as a Special Flood Hazard Area, you may qualify for a lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy.

Some people have purchased flood insurance because the bank required it when they got a mortgage or home improvement loan.

Usually these policies just cover the building’s structure and not the contents. During the kind of flooding that happens in your area, there is usually more damage to the furniture and contents than there is to the structure. Be sure you have contents coverage.

Don’t wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection. In most cases, there is a 30- day waiting period before National Flood Insurance coverage takes effect.

Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage

# **Borough of North Plainfield Flood Safety Guidance**

**Flood Alerting System** – The Borough collects information through several means in an attempt to predict any potential flooding. Once a determination has been made that a significant chance for flooding to occur has been made the Flood Sirens will be activated as well as messages through our notification system.

**Flood Watch** – Flooding is possible within the flood prone area, sirens will sound 4 blasts for 1½ minutes.

**Flood Warning** – Flooding is imminent or has been reported, sirens sound 16 short blasts for 2½ minutes.

Once these sirens have been activated please tune in to **1630 on your AM radio.**

**\*\*\*DO NOT CALL THE POLICE OR FIRE DEPARTMENT UNLESS AN EMERGENCY EXISTS\*\*\*** You will hear announcements as to the extent and procedures to follow. At times you will be asked to evacuate your homes, not only for your safety but also the safety of our Emergency Responders.

**Shelters** – If an announcement has been made to evacuate your home, the Borough will set up TEMPORARY shelters. These shelters will provide a place for you and your family to gather out of the weather and afford you the opportunity to arrange for permanent shelter until the situation has stabilized.

DO NOT go into flooded basements! Your basement is typically where the homes utilities are found. Once these utilities have been covered with water they became a hazard and should only be dealt with by Properly Trained individuals. Please make an effort to shut off and secure these utilities prior to water coming in to your home.

Never attempt to cross flooded streams, brooks or streets! The waters current is strong and unpredictable. Also hazards that may lie under the water are not visible and potentially dangerous.

Plan ahead for disasters and know escape routes to higher ground; monitor water levels around your home. Evacuate when advised! Water rises quickly once flooding starts; you have less time than you think! If you do not evacuate when advised it may take longer for Rescue efforts to reach you if at all.

DO NOT attempt to return to flooded areas until you check with Emergency Services Personnel, these areas are hazardous and serious injury could occur. Electrical wires down in water can cause electrocution and debris traveling under and on top of the water may cause you to be injured or dragged into the current.