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County warns of flooding risks as snow starts to melt]

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Dufferin County residents are being warned of the potential risks for flooding as warmer weather approaches.

With the spring thaw, the County of Dufferin is reminding residents that there is an increased chance of flooding due to seasonal melting snow, ice jams, and heavy spring rain.

?The climate is changing and Dufferin County is getting warmer, wetter, and wilder,? said Sara MacRae, climate and energy manager for the county. ?This means heavier rainfall events are happening more often, and with that comes an increased risk of flooding to our homes.?

To help residents, the county has shared a few easy steps to ensure readiness for potential flooding. They include asking your insurance provider about water damage coverage; storing valuables and hazardous materials in watertight containers; making and practicing a family emergency plan; and preparing an emergency kit that allows you to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

?Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Canada. Flooding occurs quickly and can happen anywhere and to anyone. But, by knowing the risks and taking steps to prepare, we can protect ourselves and our property,? added Steven Murphy, manager of 911 preparedness and corporate projects.

According to the Government of Canada, the average cost of repairing a flooded basement is over $40,000.

The cost of prevention can range from as low as $0 by maintaining sump pumps and clearing debris inside and outside the house to around $250 with extended downspouts, rain barrels, and flooding alarms.

Dufferin County will be hosting an event on Mar. 18 at Orangeville Home Hardware to speak with residents about the risks associated with floods, the importance of flood safety, and how you can best prepare for possible flooding. Materials to help prepare for a flood will be on display and available for purchase.

?We encourage Dufferin residents to come out and visit us to learn more about the easy steps they can take to keep themselves, their families, and their homes safe this spring and all year round from flooding,? said Murphy.

For more information on flood safety and resources, including a video on how to prepare for potential floods, visit www.dufferincounty.ca/floodprotection.