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Don?t wait for the water: Take flood prevention measures and stay safe

Floods can wreak havoc on homes, causing extensive damage to infrastructure and personal belongings and posing significant risks to safety.

With warmer, wetter weather in the forecast, Dufferin County is reminding residents about the flood prevention measures they can take to protect their homes and families and what to do if a flood happens.

?Flooding is the most common natural disaster in Canada and floods can happen anywhere, at any time of year, to anyone,? said Steven Murphy, manager of 911 and preparedness at Dufferin County.

?A changing climate brings more frequent and intense rainfall events, elevating the risk of flooding in our region,? said Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy at Dufferin County. ?By knowing the risks and taking steps to prepare, residents can minimize damage, protect their belongings and ensure the safety of their families.?

Prevent a flood

The average basement flood costs $43,000 to repair. But home protection is easier than you think and you can take basic flood prevention measures for any budget:

? $0 ? Maintain what you have at least twice per year. Remove debris inside and outside your home, test your sump pump, ensure you have a battery back-up and maintain your backwater valve.

? Under $250 ? By tackling some do-it-yourself projects, you can complete simple updates to your home to keep it safe. Install window well covers, disconnect and extend downspouts, install a flood alarm and install a rain barrel.

? Over $250 ? A contractor can help you with some larger or more complex projects that will help you lower your flood risk. Install window wells, correct grading, install a backwater valve, install backup sump pump power source and consider replacing traditional grass lawn with a rain garden.

For more information and to access valuable flood protection resources, visit dufferincounty.ca/floodprotection

Prepare for a flood

Even with flood prevention measures in place, you should be ready and able to respond quickly during a flood event. There are easy steps you can take to ensure you are ready for potential flooding:

? Ask your insurance provider about water damage coverage. In many cases, flood damage is not covered by insurance. Speak with your broker and review your insurance policy carefully.

? Store your valuables and hazardous materials in watertight containers. Heating fuel like bulk propane or oil should be secured. Gas cans should be stored low, on the ground and in an outbuilding.

? Make and practice a family emergency plan so that everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of a flooding emergency.

? Prepare an emergency kit so that you and your family are self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

If flooding does occur, residents are asked to:

? Stay updated. Monitor local weather forecasts and emergency alerts. Seek information from trusted sources including the local municipalities and the Ontario Provincial Police. For road closure information visit Municipal511.

? Avoid flooded areas. Never drive or walk through flooded streets or water-covered areas. Flood waters can rise rapidly, making them unsafe.

There are five different watersheds in Dufferin County. Each Conservation Authority has a role in flood prevention and monitoring. You can learn more by visiting the Conservation Authorities' websites, which can be found on Dufferin's website at www.dufferincounty.ca.

?Always stay vigilant and follow the guidance of local officials, and take proactive steps to protect your home and loved ones,? reads a press release from the County of Dufferin. ?Together, we can keep our community safe by being prepared and remaining informed.?