

Flood Insurance is an Important Asset

Helena, Mont. – Your house has never flooded. You have a homeowner's insurance policy. You're thinking, "I'm covered."

Maybe not.

Many Montana residents may believe they don't need to buy flood insurance because they don't live in a high-risk flood zone, but flooding can happen anywhere, often to the surprise of residents who thought they were covered for disasters. Unfortunately, when flooding happens, the damage is not covered by most homeowners' insurance policies. One inch of floodwater can cause up to \$25,000 of damage in a home.

Flooding in Montana is not uncommon. Yet less than 11% of structures in Carbon, Park, Stillwater or Yellowstone counties are covered by flood-insurance policies issued by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Following June's recent flooding, 103 policyholders filed flood claims with a total payout of over \$3 million as of Aug. 9.

Many residents in Carbon, Park, Stillwater, and Yellowstone counties live in designated high-risk flood zones. However, it doesn't matter whether the flood insurance policyholders of the NFIP in these counties live in designated high-risk, low-risk or moderate-risk flood zones. Floods can occur in any zone, including those where there is not a requirement to purchase flood protection.

Property owners can protect themselves from financial losses by having a flood insurance policy through the NFIP. Flood insurance coverage is available regardless of federal disaster declarations. There is a 30-day waiting period before new policies go into effect, so don't wait to obtain a policy.

In Montana, 136 communities participate in the NFIP. Residents can purchase a flood insurance policy if their community, including city, county or tribe, participates in the NFIP, no matter their flood risk.



The following communities currently participate in the NFIP:

Carbon County (unincorporated areas), Bear Creek, Bridger, Fromberg, Joliet, Red Lodge

Park County (unincorporated areas), Livingston, Clyde Park

Stillwater County (unincorporated areas), Columbus

Yellowstone County (unincorporated areas), Billings, Laurel

Coverage is available for residential and commercial buildings and the contents therein:

- Up to \$100,000 is available to renters for contents.
- Up to \$250,000 in building coverage and up to \$100,000 in contents coverage for single-to-four family residential structures.
- Up to \$500,000 in building coverage and up to \$100,000 in contents coverage for five-or-more family residential structures.
- Up to \$500,000 in building coverage and up to \$500,000 in contents coverage for businesses.

How to buy:

- Contact your insurance company or agent. In addition to the NFIP, flood insurance is also available from some private insurance providers. Please visit [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov) for valuable resources and information pertaining to floods and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- For an agent referral, call 800-427-4661 or visit [fema.gov/flood-insurance](https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance).

Contact the FEMA Mitigation Helpline at 833-FEMA-4-US (833-336-2487) for information on resilient building practices. Mitigation specialists are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MDT. You can also email the team at FEMA-R8-Hmhelp@fema.dhs.gov.

For more information about FEMA's support to Montana's flooding and severe storms recovery, visit www.fema.gov/disaster/4655. Follow the FEMA Region 8 Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/femaregion8>.

