



# FEMA

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# Fact Sheet

## West Virginians: Tips to Make Your Home More Flood-Resistant

**CHARLESTON, W. Va.** – Floods are a fact of life in some parts of West Virginia. There are several things you can do to reduce the risk of future flood damage to your property.

- **Electrical Components** – Help prevent a flood from taking out your electricity. Raise the whole system, wiring included, at least a foot higher than the 100-year flood elevation. Your local floodplain administrator or floodplain ordinance is where you'll find the height of the 100-year flood elevation. You must hire a licensed contractor to modify your electrical system.
- **Appliances** – Raise appliances such as washers and dryers at least a foot above the 100-year flood elevation. Elevate appliances with materials that can withstand flooding, such as pressure-treated lumber. You can also simply move them to a higher floor.
- **HVAC** – Heating and air-conditioning equipment (HVAC) can be destroyed by flooding. Reduce that risk by moving your HVAC from the basement to a higher floor or even to the attic. A move like this requires a professional contractor. Another option is to leave the equipment where it is and build a concrete or masonry block floodwall around it with a floodgate that can be closed to keep floodwaters out.
- **Fuel Tanks** – Fuel tanks must be anchored to keep from being washed away by floodwaters. An unanchored tank may crash into walls and can be swept downstream where it can damage other houses. Even a buried tank can “float” to the surface if the soil becomes waterlogged. If a tank is ripped away by floodwaters, the supply line tears and the basement can become contaminated by oil. Oil spills are a serious environmental problem following floods. For safety's sake, consult with local officials and building professionals about the best methods of anchoring fuel tanks within the 100-year floodplain.
- **Sewer Backflow Valves** – Flooding can cause sewage from sanitary sewer lines to back up into houses through drain pipes. These backflows not only cause damage that is hard to repair but can also create health hazards. Backflow valves are designed to block drain pipes temporarily and prevent flow into the house. Backflow valves can be simple or complex and should be installed by a licensed plumber or contractor.

- **Flood Resistant Materials** – Marine plywood, rigid (closed cell) insulation, galvanized nails, metal doors and frames, sheet vinyl flooring or tile, plastic wood, and pressure-treated lumber are some of the materials recommended for rebuilding structures at risk of flooding.

At [go.usa.gov/xYVMH](http://go.usa.gov/xYVMH) you'll find a book about protecting your home from floods with detailed information on the modifications discussed above. For more information about rebuilding, contact your local County Emergency Manager or Building Department.

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*West Virginians seeking information about disaster-related services and unmet needs should call **West Virginia 211**, a statewide information and referral service. Contact **211** for help finding food, childcare, crisis counseling, and many other resources in your local community. The West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has set up a hotline for flood survivors: **800-451-1954**. Volunteers who wish to help with flood response and recovery may sign up at [www.volunteerwv.org](http://www.volunteerwv.org) or [wvvoad.org](http://wvvoad.org). Visit the flood pages at [www.wvflood.com](http://www.wvflood.com).*

*All FEMA disaster assistance will be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment), religion, national origin, age, disability, limited English proficiency, economic status, or retaliation. If you believe your civil rights are being violated, call **800-621-3362** or **800-462-7585**(TTY/TDD).*

*FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.*