

Media Release

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Tips for Preparing For the Spring Melt and Runoff

Spring time floods can occur in Ontario each year. Usually weather forecasts can predict rain or quick thaw events. Take this opportunity to protect yourself and your property from potential flooding. The Leeds Grenville and Lanark Health Unit provides the following advice to help you prepare for possible spring flooding.

Before the Flood:

- Monitor weather and take warnings seriously.
- Ensure that your sump pump is in good working order and that your drainage hose is clear of ice and debris.
- Have an emergency kit stocked and ready to go. Be sure to include important documents, cash and medications.
- Move items likely to be affected by a flood to higher areas where possible.
- Ensure chemicals, cleaners, gas cans etc. are stored in such a manner as not to contaminate flood water.
- Ensure eaves-troughs divert water away from your home and landscaping diverts water away from the home not into it.
- Ensure drainage ditches etc. around your home are clear and can function during periods of heavy rain.
- Label the shut off valves and the direction to turn off the gas, water, power etc. If you must leave your home due to rising flood waters, turn off the power, gas etc.
- Have your vehicle filled up and ready to go.
- Ensure you have a supply of fuel for generators and pumps. Store fuel in a manner to prevent spills that may contaminate flood water or private wells.

Flood water can conceal many hazardous situations. Submerged items with sharp edges may not be seen and can cause injury. Fast moving spring flood waters pose a risk of hypothermia and drowning (even for skilled swimmers) due to the cold temperatures, unexpected currents and submerged hazards.

The following tips will help protect your family during flooding events:

- Keep your family safe by keeping family members and pets away from fast flowing drainage ditches, melting lakes and creeks and away from flooded areas.
- Flood water entering homes and basements may come into contact with electrical outlets, panel boxes, and various appliances that may have an electrical component to them. Water conducts electricity so do not enter areas where electrical systems have been affected as you may be electrocuted.
- Always wait for clearance from the electrical authority before entering these areas. Building materials, clothing, furniture etc. that have been exposed to flood waters are likely contaminated and can support the growth of mold.
- While some items can be salvaged, cleaned and disinfected, others may need to be discarded. Where possible seek professional advice during clean up. If you attempt to salvage and clean on your own, make sure you wear protective clothing, a mask and gloves.
- Well water and septic systems can be impacted by flood water contact the health unit for advice on these issues

For more information on flooding please visit the health unit website at www.healthunit.org or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853.

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