

The Local Flood Hazard

If your property is located within a floodplain; the probabilities are that someday your property will be damaged by flooding. While your property may be high enough that it has not flooded recently; however, it could still flood in the future because all flood events are not the same. This brochure will provide suggestions as to what you can do to protect yourself and your property. The first and most important information that obtain is out how likely it is that your home will be flooded. You may call Growth Management at 891-7100 or visit the online flood information site at talgov.com.

Tallahassee's flooding sources include streams and lakes such as East Ditch, Northeast Ditch, West Ditch, Central Drainage Ditch, Alford Arm Tributary, Saint Augustine Branch, Lake Lafayette, Lake Jackson and Lake Munson. Most of the flooding in Tallahassee is caused by rising or flowing water. Other properties that are located outside the typical flood zone can be subject to flooding also due to their topography. The factors that may contribute to flooding due to topography could include poor site grading, incorrect construction of driveways and landscaping..

History

The City of Tallahassee is 30 miles inland from the coast and receives an average of 62 inches of rainfall per year. It is rated among the wettest cities in the United States. Tropical weather events such as Hurricanes and Tropical Storms are most prevalent from June 1st through November 30th. Most casualties caused by Hurricanes are the result of flooding. Major storms of interest include 2001 Tropical Storm Allison & Barry in 2001 and Tropical Storm Fay in 2008. The wettest year on record was 104 inches 1964.

Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from the Growth Management Department, even re-grading or filling in the floodplain.

- Always check with the Growth Management Department before you build on, alter, grade, or place fill on your property. A permit may be required to ensure that these activities do not cause flooding issues to other surrounding properties.
- If you see building or filling without a city permit sign posted, call the Environmental Services Division of the Growth Management Department at 891-7100.

The Substantial Improvement/Damage Requirements

Any substantially improved or substantially damaged home must be brought up to the NFIP and City's Flood Ordinance requirements. This is known as the "50% rule." The "50% Rule" states that if the lowest finished floor or an existing house is below the base flood elevation (BFE) and the cost of the repairs or renovations equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the improvement or repair is started, the lowest finished floor elevation must be raised or elevated to at least the BFE. Also note that additional City floodplain requirements may apply.

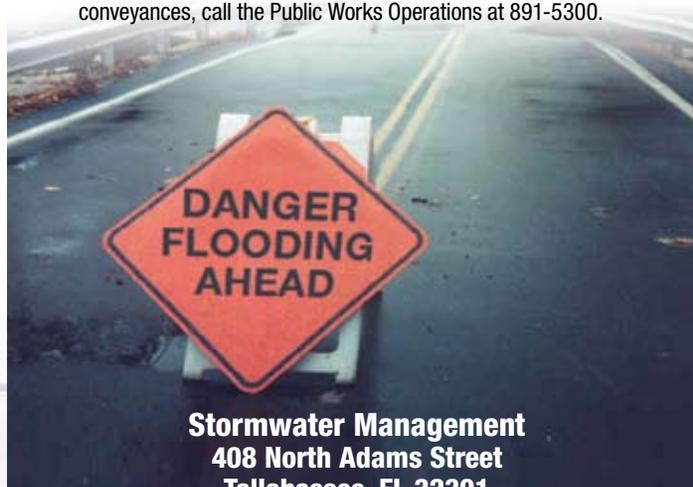
Drainage System Maintenance

What You Can Do: Several of the city's flood damage mitigation and management efforts depend on your cooperation and assistance. Here are some ways you can help:

- Do not dump or throw anything into Drainage Conveyances -this is a violation of city code. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and obstruct downstream channels or pipes. Drainage conveyances obstructed or restricted with debris and other materials lose their ability to function as designed.
- The city has a Storm Water Conveyance maintenance program that will remove obstructions such as debris, trees and other materials.. If you observe the illicit dumping of debris into drainage conveyances, call the Public Works Operations at 891-5300.



Flood Prevention and Preparedness Information



Stormwater Management
 408 North Adams Street
 Tallahassee, FL 32301
 850-891-6860



Flood Safety

Monitor weather reports if a severe weather event is forecasted for the Tallahassee area. If the forecast predicts with certainty that a flood will threaten your property, you should shut off the gas and electricity and move valuable contents to a safe place. It is unlikely that you will get any advanced warning, so a detailed checklist prepared in advance will help ensure that you do not forget anything.

Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, and most of these occur during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive: two feet (or at times even less) of rapidly moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that firm ground is still there. Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Do not drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out, or the water may be deep enough to float your vehicle off the road. Look out for animals. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Look out for snakes and other animals that may be hiding under debris. Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors may be covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery. For more information please contact Stormwater Management at 891-6860, or visit our web site at Tal.gov. Mailing Address: City of Tallahassee Stormwater Management City Hall 300 S. Adams St. (B-35) Tallahassee, FL 32301-1731. Additional information can be found on the FEMA website at www.fema.gov and at www.Tal.gov.

Practice safety during floods, but don't panic. Have your power turned off. Call the City's Electric Utility at 891-4YOU (4968). Some appliances, such as television sets; keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Do not use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

Electrocution is the number two flood killer, after drowning. Electric current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the City's Electric Utility at 891-4YOU (4968) or the Tallahassee Police Department at 891-4200. Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated. Call the city's underground utilities at 891-4YOU (4968). Do not walk through flowing water. **STAY OUT OF FLOOD WATERS!!!!**

Flood Insurance

Having flood insurance policy is extremely beneficial in protecting your property. If you do not have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because Tallahassee participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), you may purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded. You can receive flood insurance information by calling NFIP at 1-800-427-4661.

The City of Tallahassee participates in the Community Rating System (CRS) program of the NFIP. The CRS rewards communities that reduce the likelihood of flood damage and create public awareness beyond NFIP requirements. Sending this brochure to our citizens is one such awareness activity. As a result of the Storm Water Management Division's Flood Control Projects and Public Works Drainage Operations Maintenance Programs, Tallahassee citizens and businesses receive a 20% discount in the premiums on their flood insurance policies. Some property owners have purchased flood insurance because it was required by banks when they obtained a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. The flood events that occur in Tallahassee typically result in more damage to furniture and contents than there is to the structure.

If you are covered by flood insurance, check out the amount and extent of coverage and make sure you have coverage for the contents. Remember, even if the last flood missed you or you have installed flood proofing devices, the next flood could be worse. There is normally a 30 day waiting period before flood insurance goes into effect. Therefore, it is essential to plan ahead.

Property Protection Measures

In order to protect your property, electrical panel boxes, heat pumps, washers and dryers and water heaters should be elevated or relocated to areas less likely to flood. It is a good idea to keep materials around the house like sandbags, plywood, lumber and plastic sheeting. These can help minimize the damage caused by flood waters and by hurricane force winds. Personnel from City Stormwater Management are prepared to make site visits upon request to assist property owners with flooding, drainage and storm sewer problems to address any site specific flooding concerns within the Community. There is also a low interest loan program through the Storm Water Management Division which provides the services of a professional engineer to evaluate your property and provide construction plans to address your flooding issues.

Be familiar with the following information on floodproofing, flood insurance, and flood safety. There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage. One way is to keep the water away by regrading your lot or by building a small floodwall or earthen berm. These methods work if your lot is fairly small, if flooding is not too deep and if your property is not in the floodway.

Flood Proofing

There are several methods by which you can Flood Proof your property some of them are water proofing of your walls, water tight doors and raising your home. Some of these methods can be very expensive so the guidance of a professional engineer may be required. Additional information is available over the internet by entering Flood Proofing in the search box.

Natural and Beneficial Functions

Our natural floodplains reduce damage by allowing flood waters to spread out over large areas which helps facilitate absorption into the ground, reduces flow rates and serves as a flood storage area to reduce downstream peaks. To protect our natural wetlands and animal habitat, we should all do our part to help keep our flood plain and floodplain waters free of contaminants such as oil, paint, anti-freeze and pesticides.

Map of The Local Flood Hazard

Flood maps and flood protection references are available at www.FEMA.gov. The librarians in the reference section of the Leon County Library provide assistance to those in need of accessing flood related information. You may also visit the city's Growth Management Department, at 435 North Macomb St., to determine if your property is located in a floodplain mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If so, the Growth Management Department can provide you with more information such as FEMA base (100-year) flood elevation, type of flood zone, and copies of elevation certificates on file. Flood protection assistance in the form of site visits, list of contractors to assist, on-site loan program, and educational outreach program such as (TAPP) Think about Personal Pollution are available from the City Stormwater Department by calling (850)891-6860. There is also the federally funded Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP) that provides grants to eligible projects to mitigate Repetitive Loss Properties against future flood losses. Information on the program is available at <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/fma/index.shtml>.

The Flood Warning System

The City of Tallahassee has an Emergency Management Plan, and monitors flash flood warnings from the National Weather Service. When warnings are received, the Emergency Alert System (EAS) disseminates the information to all radio and television stations in Tallahassee. The EAS designated radio stations for long-term emergency events (incase other stations are off the air) are WTNT - 94.9 FM, and WNLS - 1270 AM. Be sure to turn on your radio and/or television when severe weather threatens. For more information during nonemergency times, you may call the City of Tallahassee emergency management coordinator at 891-6201.

