

# ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FLOOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

## YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS BROCHURE BECAUSE YOUR PROPERTY IS IN OR NEAR A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA.

➤ **History of Flooding in the City of Petaluma.** It is critical to remember that the City of Petaluma is subject to flooding. The City has experienced five major flooding events since 1982, many of which resulted in flood damages. The most recent major flood event was the New Year's Eve flood of December, 2005. Being prepared is your best defense against such events. The City of Petaluma is subject to flooding from heavy rains and high tides.

### *What should you do before a flood?*

➤ **Determine if your property is located in an area subject to flooding.** The following areas have a known potential for flooding:

Auto Center Drive	Payran Neighborhood
Capri Creek/Sunrise Park	Petaluma Estates
Denman Reach	Plaza Shopping Center
Factory Outlets	Redwood Business Park
Industrial Avenue	Youngstown Estates
Leisure Lake	

This is not a complete list of areas that are within flood zones, but rather a list of areas with documented flooding problems. A property located within a flood zone does not necessarily have flooding problems. If your neighborhood is not listed, your property may still be within a flood zone, as designated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps. Upon request, the Public Works Department at (707) 778-4303, will make flood zone determinations for properties within the City. FEMA maps are also available in Petaluma Public Library and at the FEMA

map service center website: [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov). If located in an "A" Zone, your property is within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), which is an area that has been determined to have the potential for flooding caused by a 100-year storm. The Public Works Department also maintains elevation certificates for many properties within the city which are also available for review.

➤ **Purchase flood insurance on your property.** Flooding is not covered by a standard homeowner's insurance policy. A separate flood insurance policy is required to cover damages incurred by flooding. Coverage is available for the building itself as well as for the contents of the building. The City of Petaluma participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that makes available federally backed flood insurance for all structures, whether or not they are located within the floodplain. Note that there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage goes into effect. More than 25 percent of NFIP claims are filed by properties located outside the 100-year floodplain, also known as the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Contact your insurance agency for more information. Flood insurance information is also available in Sonoma County Public Libraries.

➤ **Maintain drainage channels and pipes free of obstruction and debris.** The City of Petaluma performs cleaning and maintenance activities on the drainage channels and pipes in City easements & rights-of-way in accordance with an established schedule and other standard operating procedures. Residents are encouraged to assist in maintaining the drainage in their areas by removing or reporting obstructions (such as shopping carts, leaves, debris, trash, etc.). Keeping drainage channels free of obstructions reduces flooding in the event of heavy rains. By way of City ordinance, it is illegal to dump trash, leaves, landscape debris, paint, grease, or any other material into any portion of the City's drainage system. Such dumping can have devastating impacts on water quality in addition to causing flooding. To report obstructions or illegal dumping, or for questions regarding drainage system maintenance, please contact the Water Resources Department at (707) 778-4546 or the Sonoma County Water Agency at (707) 521-1845.

➤ **Protect your property from the hazards of flooding and wind.** Various methods may be used to minimize flooding. If the floor level of your property is lower than the "Base Flood Elevation" (elevation of the 100-year flood, based on the FEMA maps), consider elevating your structure, if possible. Brochures discussing flood proofing and other mitigation measures are available at the Petaluma Public Library. If a flood is imminent, property can be protected by sandbagging areas subject to the entry of water into living spaces. The City of Petaluma Public Works Department provides sand and sand bags to the public on Hopper Street near the City's corporation yard. Valuables and furniture may also be moved to higher areas of the dwelling to minimize damages. The City of Petaluma will make site visits to provide one-on-one advice to a property owner regarding flooding and drainage issues on private property. We also have site specific information for some parcels within Petaluma. For more information, please contact the City's Floodplain Administrator at (707) 778-4303.

➤ **Meet improvement requirements.** The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that if the cost of reconstruction, additions, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards. For example, a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged must be elevated above the base flood elevation. Please contact the City's Floodplain Administrator at (707) 778-4311 for more information.

➤ **Meet permitting requirements.** All development within the city requires a permit. Always check and fulfill permitting requirements with the Planning and Building Divisions at (707) 778-4301 and/or the Floodplain Administrator at (707) 778-4303 before you build on, alter, fill, or re-grade on any portion of your property and/or within any easement or right-of-way. Also, contact either of the numbers above to report any suspected permitting violations.

➤ **Keep an emergency supply.** Non-perishable food, water, batteries, flashlights, a manual can opener, and a battery-operated radio should be kept available.

### *What should you do during a flood?*

➤ If your property is in imminent danger of flooding, please contact PG&E at 1-800- 743-5000 to request that your power and natural gas be shut off, or for guidance on how to do it yourself. This number may also be contacted regarding any other electrical or natural gas emergencies.

Tune-in to local commercial radio stations (KZST 100.1, KSRO AM 1350, KCBS AM 740, KBBF 89.1 FM (Spanish), television stations or NOAA Weather Radio (frequencies 146.460 or 146.535) for Watch and Warning Bulletins and any corresponding emergency instructions. The City of Petaluma Fire Department will order or advise evacuations if conditions warrant this action. If evacuations are called for, it is imperative that you follow instructions in the time frame noted.

Questions regarding emergency procedures may be addressed to the Petaluma Fire Department at (707) 778-4390.

➤ If dangerous flooding conditions are imminent, avoid driving a vehicle if possible. Do not attempt to drive or wade through deep pockets of water or running washes. Unstable banks should be avoided.

➤ Develop an evacuation plan for your family.

➤ Avoid low-lying areas. Seek shelter in the highest areas possible.

## ***What should you do after a flood?***

- Listen to the radio for emergency instructions.
- Avoid driving if possible.
- Follow established procedures for property damage repairs:

Select a contractor who is appropriately licensed to perform the necessary work. State law and the City of Petaluma require contractors to be licensed and/or registered with the State Contractors Licensing Board for any construction contract above \$500. Additionally, all contractors must also have a City of Petaluma Business License. Verify that contractors are licensed before signing or agreeing to any repair contracts. It is also recommended that you verify certification of liability and workman's compensation insurance. Complaints against licensed contractors may be referred to the State Board. For more information, visit the State Board's website at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov).

Require your contractors to obtain the proper permits for work being performed. Permits are required for any permanent improvement (including drywall, roofing, siding, additions, alterations, etc.) to a structure and for site work such as grading, filling, etc. Permits are required even if a homeowner is doing the work as an owner/builder.

Questions about permits or contractor licensing may be addressed to the City of Petaluma Building Division at (707) 778-4301.

***Recognize the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains to help reduce flooding:*** Floodplains are a natural component of the City of Petaluma Watershed. Understanding and protecting the natural functions of floodplains helps reduce flood damage and protect resources. When flooding spreads out across the floodplain, its energy is dissipated, which results in lower flood flows downstream, reduced erosion of the streambank and channel, deposition of sediments higher in the watershed and improved groundwater recharge. Floodplains are scenic, valued wildlife habitat, and suitable for farming. Poorly planned development in floodplains can lead to streambank erosion, loss of valuable property, increased risk of

flooding to downstream properties and degradation of water quality.

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**For more information about flood safety or the NFIP, please note the following:**

<http://cityofpetaluma.net/pubworks/plan-flood.html>  
[www.floodalert.fema.gov](http://www.floodalert.fema.gov)  
[www.fema.gov/hazards/floods](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/floods)  
1-888-FLOOD29

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*This information is provided by the City of Petaluma and is applicable to properties within the limits of the City. If you reside in a jurisdiction other than the City of Petaluma, contact your regulatory authority for information. If you believe you received this notice in error, or if you no longer own this property, please contact the City of Petaluma Public Works Department at (707)778 -4303 or via U.S. mail.*

**City of Petaluma  
Public Works Department  
11 English Street  
Petaluma, CA 94952**

# FLOOD SAFETY



**A Publication for City of Petaluma Property Owners**