

## Flood Safety

- **Do not walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the number one cause of flood-related deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there.
- **Do not drive through a flooded area.** More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers—the road ahead is either washed out or is deep enough to stall a car. Several feet of water is enough to float a car.
- **Stay away from power lines & electrical wires.** The number two flood-related killer after drowning is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the Tillamook People's Utility District at (800) 422-2535, or dial 911.
- **Do not use electrical appliances that have been flooded.** Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.
- **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.
- **Be alert for gas leaks.** If you have LP Gas at your property, use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been well ventilated.
- **Do not enter damaged buildings if severe flooding has occurred.** An intense flood event has enough power to damage the structural integrity of most structures. It is advisable to have a Building Inspector or other authorized official inspect the structure to ensure habitability after a major flood event.



## Conclusion

Flooding in Nehalem sometimes seems to be a fact of life. Yet, taking the steps recommended herein can go a long way to protect you, your family and your property from the dangers of flooding. We are committed to helping our citizens protect themselves from the dangers of flooding and can provide you with more information regarding possible ways to reduce your risk to flooding.

Thank you,

Melissa Thompson-Kiefer  
City Manager

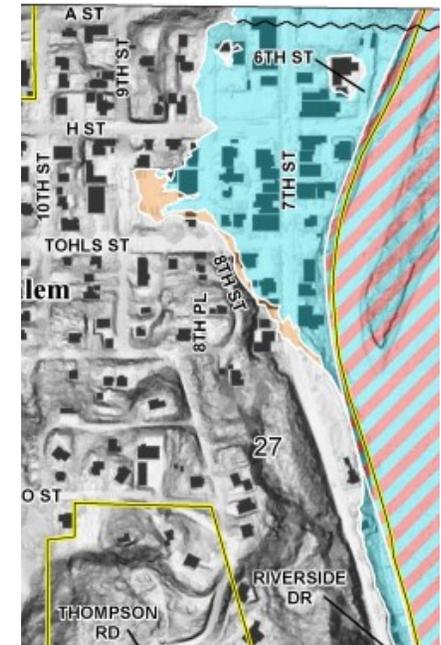
Visit the City's website at [nehalem.gov/flood](http://nehalem.gov/flood) for more information.



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CITY OF NEHALEM

# FLOOD PROTECTION INFORMATION



CITY OF NEHALEM  
Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)  
Community Panel #410200 0207F & 209F  
Effective: September 28, 2018

Tel: 503-368-5627

Flooding within the City occurs on an annual basis due to the influences upon the Nehalem River. Flooding within the City can be attributed to two or more of the following:

1. Heavy Rains—the total drainage area of both the North and South Forks of the Nehalem River drain an area of over 120 square miles. Thus, a half-inch of precipitation in town is multiplied over 120 times, with all of the runoff ending up in the Main Fork of the Nehalem River.
2. Tidal Influence—Ocean tides play a large part during our instances of flooding. A high tide prevents the natural flow of water from entering the Bay and eventually the ocean. Instead of the river water flowing out, it actually either flows back in or “pools” in the bay; causing the level of the river to rise since the water has no other place to go. Also impacted by tidal influences is storm water runoff: When the River rises, storm water is unable to “escape” the City’s storm drains creating a “backlog” of water, which also may have a minor impact on flooding.
3. “Pineapple Express”—The Pineapple Express is an event where the Jet Stream settles into a long, straight, fast flow across the eastern Pacific allowing huge amounts of tropical air to move northeast from near Hawaii toward the West Coast. Since this takes place during the Winter, what we get is a lot of rain and warm temperatures that quickly melts accumulated snow packs in the mountains.

All three of these attributes combined in 1996 to give our City the worst flooding in over 150 years. In 1996, the Nehalem River crested over seventeen feet (17') higher than flood stage. As a comparison, the River crests at an average of one to two feet above flood stage each year when “normal” flooding occurs.

Your property may be high enough that it was not flooded in the recent past. However, if you are in the floodplain, the odds are that someday your property could be damaged by flooding. This brochure gives you some ideas of what you can do to protect yourself.

### City Flood Services

The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at Nehalem City Hall and the City’s website at [nehalem.gov/flood](http://nehalem.gov/flood) that include items such as:

- The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Nehalem;
- Handouts on steps property owners can take to flood proof and/or otherwise reduce the impact of floods;
- How to select a contractor to assist in making structural changes to your building(s);
- Information on Flood Insurance requirements.

Additionally, the City may be able to provide you site-specific information regarding historical flooding, Elevation Certificates, base flood elevation, and development requirements, to list a few. Also, arrangements can be made to meet with City Staff to review properties on-site in order

to review critical issues such as drainage, utility placement, and compliance with the Nehalem Zoning Ordinance with the overall purpose being to mitigate potential hazards during flood events.

### What You Can Do

Several of the City’s efforts depend on your cooperation and assistance. Here is how you can help:

- **Do not dump or throw anything into any ditch or storm drain.** Dumping items such as garbage, tree limbs or grass clippings can accumulate and plug ditches and storm drains, creating a potential for flooding since the water has no other place to go. If you see dumping or debris in a storm drain and/or drainage ditch, please call the City immediately at (503) 368-5627.
- If your property is next to a drainage ditch, **please keep the banks clear of brush and debris.**
- Always check with the City before you build on, alter, re-grade or place fill on your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties. If you see such activity, please call us immediately at (503) 368-5627.

### Floodproofing

There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage. One way to keep the water away is by re-grading your lot or by building a small floodwall or earthen berm, in order to force water away from any structures. These methods work if your lot is large enough, if flooding is not too deep, and if your property is not in the floodway. City Staff can provide you with more information.

Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. However, this method is not recommended for houses with basements or if water will get over two feet deep.

A third, and highly advisable approach, is to raise your building above flood levels. The Nehalem Zoning Ordinance requires that all new construction or improvements (cumulative) that exceed more than half the value of the existing structure be elevated two feet (2') above the base flood elevation. Base flood information is available at City Hall. As you can see, most of the buildings in the City’s downtown were elevated after 1996. While most of these “elevations” occurred with the financial assistance of Oregon State Emergency Management, a number of buildings were elevated by the property owners themselves. Since 1996, there has been no appreciable property damage caused to these structures by flooding as they now sit two feet (or more) higher than the levels of the 1996 Flood itself.

Many buildings, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that may back up into the basement during heavy rains. A plug or standpipe can stop this if the water doesn’t get more than one or two feet deep. They can be purchased at a hardware store for less than \$30.00. For deeper sewer backup flooding, talk to a plumber about overhead sewers or a backup valve.

As a whole, these measures are called flood-proofing or retrofiting. More information is available at City Hall. PLEASE NOTE: Any alteration to your building or land may require a Building Permit. Even re-grading or filling in the floodplain may require a

permit. Also, if any reconstruction, addition or other improvement to a building is equal to or exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the building’s market value, then the building must meet the same requirements as a new building (i.e., be elevated 2' above base flood, construction materials, etc.). Contact City Hall at (503) 368-5627 for more information.



If you know a flood is likely to occur, you should shut off the gas (if any) and electricity and move valuable contents to a higher location. Preparing a detailed checklist in advance of a flood event will greatly assist you in taking the steps necessary to ensure that you and your family are safe, and that your valuable property is protected as much as possible against flood damage.

### Flood Insurance

If you don’t have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner’s insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because the City of Nehalem has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since 1981, you can 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 previously flooded.

Some people have purchased flood insurance because it was required by their lender when they got a mortgage or home improvement loan. Mortgages, loans and grants from Federal Agencies (FHA, VA, FEMA, etc.) and commercial lenders (including Fannie Mae & Freddie Mac) require that flood insurance be purchased for buildings located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Usually, however, these policies cover the building’s structure and not the contents. If you are covered, check out the amount and make sure you have contents-coverage. Remember: Even if the last flood missed you or you have done some flood-proofing, the next flood could be worse. Flood insurance covers ALL surface floods. Contact your insurance agent, lender or the City for more information.

### Community Rating System (CRS)

In 2003, the City was certified to be included in FEMA’s CRS Program. This program was developed to recognize communities who have taken steps to mitigate flood hazards and prevent future losses. Because of the steps that the City has taken to mitigate flooding, our citizens will receive a credit on their Flood Insurance Premiums. For all properties within the SFHA (Zones A & AE on FIRM), they currently receive a 15% discount on their Flood Insurance Premiums, with all other properties within the City receiving a 5% discount. These discounts take effect when either a new Flood Insurance Policy is issued or a Policy is renewed.

Don’t wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection if you don’t already have it. There is a 30-day waiting period before National Flood Insurance Program coverage takes effect. Please contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

