



Don't wait for the next flood to buy flood insurance. Act now to safeguard your business, home, and property. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Do not dump or throw anything else into lakes, rivers, streams, or ditches. *Section 11-3-23* of the Birmingham City Code prohibits “criminal littering” in any public or private waters or property. Moreover, if you see dumping or debris in any of the private or public waters, contact the Department of Public Works at (205) 254-6314 or call 311, as the debris may increase flooding on your property.

Every piece of debris, such as garbage, tires, lumber, furniture and appliances, can obstruct the flow of waters that can cause overflows onto roads and yards. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug channels that may also result in an overflow. If your property is next to a lake, stream or drainage structure, please do your part — keep the banks and inlets clear of brush and trash.

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

The Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) issues flood watches (when conditions are right for flooding) and flood warnings (flooding is imminent or is in progress) for Birmingham through TV and radio broadcasts. Since the EMA maintains 24-hour, direct contact with the National Weather Service (NWS), it can provide the latest flood threat information. If needed, the EMA also can override local cable broadcasts to provide flood threat information; send siren-equipped vehicles to critical facilities, such as hospitals, nursing public places; and send mobile address units and personnel for door-to-door warning evacuation.

FLOODING SAFETY TIPS

- ▶ Stay tuned to radio and TV.
- ▶ Turn off your electricity by flipping the circuit breakers off or removing fuses.
- ▶ Plan an escape route to higher ground.
- ▶ Avoid stream banks.
- ▶ Do not attempt to cross flooding streams on foot or by car.
- ▶ Have a portable radio, flashlight, and extra batteries on hand.
- ▶ Evacuate the flood hazard area when advised to do so by the police or fire department.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Floodplain Management	254-2479
Stormwater Management	254-2479
Public Works	254-6314
Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits	254-2430
Permitting Services Offices ...	254-2904
City Engineer's Office	254-2488
EMA	254-2039
Non-Emergency	311

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS

The floodplains within the City of Birmingham are an important natural asset. These relatively low, natural areas next to streams, rivers, and lakes periodically flood and, in doing so, provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. Some natural and beneficial functions of the flood plain include:

- ▶ Storage and conveyance of stormwater.
- ▶ Reduction of flood velocities and flood peaks, wind and wave impacts, and soil erosion and sedimentation.
- ▶ Improvement of water quality by filtering nutrients and impurities from stormwater runoff.
- ▶ Improvement of groundwater supply and quality that helps maintain and improve conditions for municipal and private wells.
- ▶ Breeding and feeding grounds and habitats for many plant and animal species.
- ▶ Open space areas for parks, greenways, hiking, camping, fishing, boating, bird-watching, picnicking, jogging, cycling, nature observing, outdoor laboratories for education, scientific study and research.

Indeed, the natural floodplains of Birmingham are one of our most delicate and treasured assets. Please do your part to preserve and protect them.

Contact the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits (205) 254-2479, or consult the reference materials in the Government Documents section of the downtown Birmingham Public Library.



*Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits
Floodplain Management Program
City Hall, Room 500
710 20th Street North
Birmingham, AL 35203*

www.birminghamal.gov



FLOOD PROTECTION INFORMATION

If you receive this information, your property is located in or near a floodplain.



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING,
ENGINEERING & PERMITS**
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**FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT & DISASTER
MITIGATION SERVICES**

Randall L. Woodfin
Mayor

Katrina R. Thomas
Director

The purpose of this pamphlet is to inform you of flood hazards within the City of Birmingham and suggest possible actions you may take to protect yourself and your property.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The 100-year floodplain is the area that has a 1% chance of flooding annually. This means your property has a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Smaller floods have a greater chance of occurring in any year and can still create a significant flood hazard to you and your property.

The flood hazard areas in Birmingham come principally from Five Mile Creek, Village Creek, Valley Creek, Shades Creek and their tributaries. However, some areas of the City experience local flooding not directly associated with a river or a creek. Floods in Birmingham are of relatively short duration (less than 10 hours) reaching maximum stage about two to four hours (or less) after an intense rainfall. Flood waters can rise at a rate of three feet per hour and in some areas of the City can attain substantial velocities. Recent flooding occurred in October 1995, January 1996, March 1996, January 1998, June 1999, March 2000, April 2001, July 2002, May 2003, and September 2004. These floods caused over \$17 million in damages to public and privately-owned properties.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Your homeowner's insurance policy will not cover losses due to flooding. The City of Birmingham participates in the National Flood Insurance Program which makes flood insurance available to all homeowners, business owners and renters in the City through insurance agencies. Please remember that most flood policies take effect 30 days after your purchase. For many people, their home (or business) and its contents represent their greatest investment. We strongly urge you to buy flood insurance to protect yourself from losses due to flooding. You do not have to live in a floodplain to have flood insurance. Property owners can insure their buildings and contents. Renters can insure their contents.

PROPERTY PROTECTION

You can do a number of things to protect your property from flood damage:

Know your flood hazard.

Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the downtown Birmingham Public Library. You can also visit the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits, Floodplain Management Staff on the fifth floor of City Hall or call (205) 254-2479 to see if your property is in a mapped floodplain. If so, we can give you more information, such as depth and frequency of flooding.

Protect your building or house.

Regrading your lot and retrofitting your building or house are two major flood protection measures available to you. Regrading involves changing your lot to eliminate or reduce flood damage while retrofitting involves changing your building to eliminate or reduce flood damage.

Decide which retrofitting techniques best protect your house or building. Consider one or more of the following measures:

- ▶ Elevating the building so that flood waters do not enter or reach any damageable portions of it.
- ▶ Constructing barriers out of fill or concrete between the building and flood waters.
- ▶ Dry flood proofing to make the building walls and floor watertight.
- ▶ Wet flood proofing to modify the structure and move the contents so that when flood waters enter the building there is little or no damage.
- ▶ Preventing basement flooding from sewer backup or sump pump failure.

When considering the above property protection measures, please feel free to call the Floodplain Management Staff at (205) 254-2479 for more information.

TAKE EMERGENCY MEASURES TO HELP REDUCE FLOOD DAMAGE TO YOUR PROPERTY DURING A FLOOD

- ▶ Keep a battery-powered radio tuned to a local station, and follow all instructions for your area.
- ▶ Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation is likely.
- ▶ Disconnect the plugs of heavy, unmovable appliances.
- ▶ Place furniture on beds, then personal items on top of the furniture.
- ▶ Anchor, secure or weigh down items that may float or move and become "battering rams."
- ▶ Place glass items in plastic bags to prevent pieces from spreading if breakage occurs.
- ▶ Put chemicals in waterproof containers and move to higher ground.
- ▶ Avoid backflow of sewer lines by closing off all sewer line entries into your house.



www.birminghamal.gov. (These advisory services are free.) Also, you may report flooding complaints to the new Call Center 311.

FLOOD PLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

Always check with the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits before you build on, alter, regrade, fill or do any other development on your property. A Floodplain Development Permit Application must be completed and submitted for review, prior to any development taking place within a floodplain. If you see building, filling or any other development without a City permit sign posted, contact the Permitting Services Office at (205) 254-2904, as the project may increase flooding on your property.

The City's Flood Plain Ordinance requires that all new residential (including manufactured homes) buildings be elevated one foot or more above the 100-year base flood elevation.

New non-residential buildings (commercial, industrial, etc.) must be elevated or flood proofed to a level of one foot or more above the

base flood elevation. The ordinance also requires that all substantial improvements to a building be treated as new construction subject to elevation or flood proofing. A substantial improvement means any repairs or improvements that equal or exceed 50% of the market value of the building. If you are interested in knowing all of the floodplain ordinance development requirements, you may request a copy from the Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits.

