

Flood Emergency Checklist

Mitigation Phase

- Identify the flood risks to your facility. The local community planning/permitting/ engineering department should have Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) which identify the flood hazard areas.
- Identify low lying areas that require sandbagging to prevent flooding.
- If physically possible, containers housings mail and important documents should be elevated at least 12 inches above the flood level, and where possible, located on a higher floor either permanently or at least prior to a flooding event.
- Anchor above ground fuel tanks to prevent floating.
- Other mitigation measures to be considered include building a floodwall, diversion weirs or ditches around low level windows or bricking them shut to protect the facility from low-level flooding, and anchoring fuel tanks, if present, to prevent them from floating and over-turning.
- Facilities can be retrofitted to eliminate the entrance of floodwaters into the facilities or to allow for the entrance of flood waters but minimizing damage. Elimination methods into elevating facility, dry flood proofing methods, levees/floodwalls, and relocation. Wet flood proofing methods will allow floodwaters to enter the facility but minimize damages. These methods will protect both facilities and equipment.
- Flood warning systems based on time to flood stage at the facility should be set into place to warn facility managers and staff members of potential danger and an action plan should be developed.
- Check valves should be installed in building sewer traps to prevent flood waters from backing up in sewer drains. Additionally, backflow prevention should be installed in potable water supply lines.
- Tape seal all hazardous materials storage areas.

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Preparedness Phase

Personnel issues

- Instruct personnel to be careful of slip hazards.
- Instruct personnel to be aware of downed electrical lines and standing water that may pose an electrical hazard.
- Instruct mail carriers and other employees that if a flash flood occurs and the mail truck stalls in rapidly rising waters, to get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- Instruct personnel not to drive or to walk through a flooded area. Alert personnel of electric hazards associated with standing water and the possibility that rapid moving water can sweep them away.
- Ask an employee to verify that all employees are back from the street or carrier routes.
- If water starts to rise inside the facility, prior to an evacuation, retreat to the next highest floor, and if necessary the roof. Take a flashlight and a portable radio with you and wait for help.
- Do not drink unboiled/unpurified drinking water until SPH gives the all clear

Facility issues

- Store all computer disks in a plastic bag and store in a designated place where they will not be destroyed by flood water. Assure all computers are placed in the designated area where they will not be destroyed if flood water enters the building.
- Postal facilities that have the possibility of flooding and which rent post office boxes should pull the mail from the bottom row of boxes to assure the mail is protected.
- Keep a battery-powered radio tuned to a local station, and follow emergency instructions.
- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation is necessary. If sheltering in place, DO NOT DO THIS.
- Remove all mail from the floor and store in plastic bags in a designated area where they will be safe from flood water. Pick up all Carrier Route Books and place in plastic bags and in a safe place where they will not be destroyed by flood water. Ensure important articles are wrapped in plastic bags and labeled.

Logistics/Actions

- Obtain materials for sandbagging.
- Identify employees that will help to fill and place sandbags.
- If a flood is predicted, store bottled water onsite.
- Bring all outdoor equipment indoors and secure it.

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Response Phase

Personnel issues

- Evaluate the need to shutdown or evacuate the building based on local conditions or on information received via radio public service addresses and information provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).
- Evacuate the facility. Instruct all personnel to proceed to another postal facility or to go home, until further notice. Provide information on a safe route away from the flood. Installation heads may dismiss employees before the end of their tours when it is necessary to comply with orders from local authorities.
- Keep in close touch with employee leaders to maintain mutual trust and understanding on how decisions are being reached.
- Seek assistance from union officials to prevent grievances and complaints.
- Put all orders affecting pay, leave, and schedules in writing, when practical.
- Make no commitments on pay leave that are unauthorized by existing law, regulations, or USPS policies
- Provide information about the emergency to all USPS personnel and contractors at the facility and the public.

Facility issues

- Determine the geographic boundaries of the emergency. This will assist in determining how best to safely exit the area or bring in any support needed.
- Perform emergency flood proofing measures. If you have a facility-specific plan addressing floods, implement the plan.
- Close valves to all gas lines and shut off the main power to the facility.

Logistics/Actions

- Move USPS vehicles and equipment to a safer location. Protect the mail, monies, receipts, and accountable and valuable papers. Determine if all vehicles, equipment, and other USPS property should be moved to another USPS facility or to a temporary facility. If you are unable to make contact, you may obtain temporary quarters, when emergency space is needed to protect the mail and postal equipment.
- Cooperate and maintain communications with the American Red Cross, based on the Cooperative Disaster Relief Understanding between the United States Postal Service and the American Red Cross.
- Make arrangements to potentially process a larger number of Form 3575, Change of Address Order forms, than are normally received. This is a standard item in the American Red Cross disaster relief effort.

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Recovery Phase

Personnel issues

- Instruct personnel not to use matches, cigarette lighters or any other open flame since gas may be trapped inside. Institute “No Smoking” policy until facility cleared by gas company/fire department
- Keep off power until an electrician has inspected your system for safety.
- Instruct employees not to drink water until it is declared safe.
- Make decisions as to whether postal operations should continue at this location. Do not re-occupy the building until safe to do so. If you answered “yes” to any of the questions on the [Initial Damage Report Sheet](#), do not re-occupy building. If facility has sustained structural damage, a structural engineer may be required to determine re-occupancy.
- Post a sign at each entrance to the facility as to habitable condition.
- Direct all personnel making deliveries or pickups to take notes of roadways, houses, businesses, or postal property that were damaged along their routes. If buildings or roadways were damaged to such an extent that delivery or pickup of the mail would be life threatening or is not possible, have these individuals report these conditions to their supervisor or to yourself. If necessary, temporarily suspend mail delivery and pickup operations in areas affected by the emergency or if operations could threaten the health and welfare of USPS personnel.
- If necessary, contact potentially affected drivers to immediately get off the streets and return to assigned USPS facility. If no direct communication is available, contact local radio stations or law enforcement authorities to get the message out.

Facility issues

- As soon as flood waters have receded from the facility, determine the facility’s condition.
- Assess extent of damage and what main systems (water, power, gasoline/fuel oil in underground storage tanks) need to be secured. Complete [Initial Damage Report Sheet](#) and send copy to Facilities Service Office. If damage is found, complete PS Form 1769, Accident Report for Property Damage, and submit it to District Safety within 24 hours.
- Procure the services of a security guard or patrol service. In an emergency, facility managers may obtain contract security without prior approval but must notify the local inspector in charge as soon as possible. During a flood, the Governor of the state may call up the National Guard to patrol the areas affected by the flood. If this is the case, the need for contract security services should not be necessary.
- If mail delivery and pickup operations have been suspended, identify a location where customers can pick up their mail and under what circumstances. Confer with Information Officer to get the information out to the public.
- For potentially contaminated mail
 1. Disinfect with effective bactericidal solution (sodium hypo-chlorite 6%) and also the inside of the trailer(s) or facilities that contained the contaminated mail. (Time dependent)
 2. Isolate the contaminated mail in area to prevent contact with other people. Cover the piles with plastic or other material to prevent the movement of contamination through the air.

3. Test mail to ensure no other hazardous materials condition exists that would be worsened by isolation procedures.
 4. Avoid inducing air movement in the building. If air movement is required for drying, filter or disinfect the exhaust.
- Determine that the building is structurally sound to enter; No potential for collapse.
 - Identify and repair structural hazards
 - Brace shelves and relocate any equipment that is unsafe
 - Remove debris that is resulting in unsafe condition
 - Develop facilities restoration priorities and requirements.
 - Reduce temperature and relative humidity to prevent mold outbreak. If warm outside, use coldest air conditioning setting – cover windows with plastic. Do not turn on heat unless required for human comfort.
 - Remove standing water and empty equipment containing water.
 - Remove wet carpeting and furnishings.
 - If everything is soaked, use commercial dehumidification except in historic buildings.
 - Leave undamaged equipment in place if building is safe. If not, move them to a secure, environmentally controlled area.
 - Protect all equipment with loose plastic sheeting.
 - Damaged equipment and mail should be moved to a safe, environmentally controlled area.
 - Damage to the building should be assessed and salvage operations should begin. The salvage operations should identify contaminated and non-contaminated building parts and equipment. The materials will be disposed of in conformance to the type and bulk of materials.
 - Once the building has been completely salvaged and all damaged materials have been removed, the facility should be thoroughly cleaned and treated to remove any further health risks.
 - Provide an update to the District regarding the condition of the facility, USPS personnel, and postal operations.
 - Plan how to bring postal operations back to normal.
 - Plan how to take any appropriate corrective measures at the facility. Emergency repairs may be made of leased premises when repair meets one or more of the following conditions: is essential for continued operation of the building, is essential for the safety or health of postal employees or customers, or is essential for the security of the mail.
 - Collect all documentation of the emergency and store it in a safe area. This documentation may be stored at the location of the emergency or provided to the Emergency Management Team's Documentation Unit Leader for filing.
 - Prepare and submit a written report to the Inspection Service. Include the same information furnished by telephone and the following.

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Termination Phase

- Implement appropriate measures to prevent future flood damages in accordance with local flood damage prevention ordinances, such as seeking a new location for the facility outside of the flood hazard area; flood proofing the exterior of the facility, elevating the facility, or elevating equipment.