

# Flood Protection Information City of Prattville

2016 EDITION

## What Are the Risks?



West Main Street @ Bridge and Court Streets. Sept. 1, 2000.

Flooding in Prattville is caused by three primary sources. Autauga Creek leaves its banks during heavy storms and floodwaters can cover large areas up to four to five feet deep. Pine Creek and its tributaries are smaller streams which flood during or soon after heavy storms. Floodwaters are not as deep, but they still cover streets and yards and can flood cars, garages, basements and lower floors. The Alabama River can flood after heavy rains or tropical systems impact the state.

Flooding in all three areas can come with little warning. Heavy rains in 2000 and 2009 caused Pine and Autauga Creeks to flood within hours. Flooding poses danger to life and property. Even though they appear to move slowly (three feet per second), a flood two feet deep can knock a man off his feet and float a car.

**Know your flood risk.** Past flood events provide good information on flood dangers, but may not completely show your flood risk. Understanding your flood risk will help you protect life and property. You are receiving this flyer due to your location in or proximity to an established flood zone. Your property may not have been impacted by recent flooding; however, your property still has a higher likelihood of being impacted by flooding than others in Prattville. This flyer gives you some ideas of what you can do to protect yourself.

## Where Can You Find More Information?

If you have questions or would like to know more about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), please contact the Prattville Planning Department at (334)595-0500 or [flood@prattvilleal.gov](mailto:flood@prattvilleal.gov).

Additional information is also available at the following websites: [planning.prattvilleal.gov](http://planning.prattvilleal.gov) or [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).

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## Do I Need Flood Insurance?

**Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods.** The City of Prattville's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program allows you to purchase separate flood insurance coverage. Flood insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded in the past. If you are interested adding flood insurance and are not sure if you have flood coverage, talk to your insurance agent. It takes thirty (30) days after the purchase date for flood insurance to take effect.

Some people may have purchased flood insurance because it was required with their mortgage or a home improvement loan. These policies usually cover just the building's structure and not the contents. Past Prattville flood events have caused more damage to furniture and contents than to the structure.

At last count, there were nearly 200 flood insurance policies in Prattville. If you have coverage, periodically check that both your building and contents coverages match current replacement values. 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.

## What Should I Do During and After a Flood?

**Do not walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. 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.

**Turn Around/Don't Drown!** Do not drive through a flooded area. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

**Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Report downed power lines to your power company or by calling 911.

**Have your electricity turned off by the Power Company.** Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Do not use appliances or motors that have been submerged unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried.

**Look out for animals, especially snakes.** Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

**Look before you step.** After a flood, the ground and floors are 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 and have your gas turned off by the gas company.** 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 ventilated.

**Avoid contact with flood waters.** Flooding can disrupt water purification and sewage disposal systems, flow through toxic waste sites, and dislodge chemicals previously stored above ground. Although most floods do not cause serious outbreaks of infectious disease or chemical poisonings, they can cause sickness in workers and others who come in contact with contaminated floodwaters.

## Can I Reduce My Flooding Risk?

There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage. One way is to keep the water away by grading your lot, or building a small floodwall or earthen berm. These methods work if your lot is large enough, if flooding is not too deep and if your property is not in the floodway. Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method is not recommended for houses with basements or if water will get over two feet deep. A third approach is to raise the house above flood levels.

Many houses, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that 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. For deeper sewer backup flooding, talk to a plumber about overhead sewers or a backup valve.

For more information about these topics visit the Prattville Public Library. **Important note:** Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from the Planning Department. Even grading or filling in the floodplain requires a permit.

Be Prepared. In the event of a flash flood, it is unlikely that you will get much warning. A detailed checklist prepared in advance will help ensure that you don't forget what to do during and after a flood.

## How Can I Help?

The City of Prattville's management of the floodplain depends on your cooperation and assistance. Here is how you can help:

- Do not dump trash or debris into the natural or concrete ditches or streams. Dumping in our ditches and streams is a violation of Prattville City Ordinance. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug channels. A plugged channel cannot carry water and is diverted to adjacent properties during rain events. Every piece of trash contributes to flooding.
- If your property is next to a ditch or stream, contact the Planning Department at (334) 595-0500 for information on your flood danger and the availability of insurance.
- Always check with the Building Department before you build on, alter, grade, or fill on your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties.
- ♦ See Something/Say Something. If you see building or filling without a city permit sign posted, contact the Planning Dept. at (334) 595-0500.



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## What Flood Related Services are Available?

You can check your flood hazard by visiting the Planning Department in the City Hall Annex Building to see if you are in a mapped floodplain. They can give you more information, such as depth of flooding, past flood problems in the area and copies of elevation certificates on buildings built in the floodplain since 1988. They also can give advice on selecting an architect, engineer or contractor. Even if you are not in a floodplain, there still may be some risk of flooding. Information concerning flood risk and reducing your flood risk is also available at the Prattville/Autauga Public Library.

If requested, Planning Department and other city personnel are available to review a property's flood risks and explain ways to stop flooding or prevent flood damage. These services are offered at no cost to the property owner.