

Flood Protection Information for City of North Port Residents

(March 2020)

Florida's climate often brings major rain events and tropical systems which can significantly impact human lives. The following information may assist in the evaluation of the potential risk of flooding and help prepare for or mitigate flooding.

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA (SFHA). Flooding is primarily caused by heavy rains associated with intense summer thunderstorms and tropical systems as well as coastal tropical storm surge. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) shows the SFHA floodplain with 1% risk of flooding in a 100-year storm event and the corresponding base flood elevation (BFE). The SFHA is located primarily near the Myakkahatchee Creek, along the Myakka River and along the city's retention ditches and canals. In these areas, floodwaters can cover streets and yards with little warning. Past rain events have flooded major roadways such as local roads in the North Port Estates and along the Myakkahatchee creek near I-75.

Be advised, however, that flooding could possibly occur anywhere in the City, depending on the storm intensity. The City continues to pursue options to upgrade its stormwater system to better handle such situations. Even if the property has not flooded in the past, there is a possibility that a future storm may result in a different outcome. The following are some actions to learn more about flood issues and how to protect yourself and your property.

MAP OF THE FLOOD HAZARD. The current FIRMs are **effective as of November 4, 2016**. FEMA has released draft FIRM revisions dated December 31, 2019 to incorporate storm surge, high tides, wave action in addition to freshwater inputs. These FIRMs are available on the FEMA website at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>. A user-friendly searchable tool to view the current effective FIRMs and draft FIRM revisions, can be accessed from the City website at <http://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information/fema-flood-map-updates>. The City's Department of Neighborhood Development Services and Public Works can advise on construction techniques for flood protection, provide elevation certificates if available from past permitting activities, provide assistance in flood zone determination, BFE, flood insurance requirements, floodways, flood depths, special flood-related hazards, historical flooding or other flood problems not shown on the FIRMs. If you need assistance with flood information, please call FEMA help desk (877)336-2627, or City's hotline (941)429-1052, or submit flood information request form: <https://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information/is-my-property-in-a-flood-zone>, scan the form and email it to PWCustService@cityofnorthport.com.

PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. The City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which allows federally funded flood insurance to be available, even if property has flooded in the past. If a house is flooded without flood insurance, any damage below the waterline will not be covered by your homeowner's insurance policy. If you are already covered by flood insurance, make sure the policy also covers building contents and the coverage limits are adequate. Remember, even if the last flood missed you or you have done some flood proofing, the next flood may affect you. Flood insurance covers all surface floods, even if a federal disaster is not declared. The City is a participant in the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) program.

The City is currently a CRS Class 6 Community which provides property owners within a SFHA a 20 percent reduction in flood insurance premiums. Additionally, properties within the City that do not lie within the SFHA receive a 5 percent reduction in their flood insurance premium should they elect such coverage. Contact your insurance agent for additional information on rates and coverage, or the NFIP at (800) 427-4661. Please note from the time of flood insurance purchase, there is up to a 30-day waiting period before National Flood Insurance Program coverage takes effect. Financial assistance may be available through grant programs for homeowners who meet the criteria of a repetitive loss building and wish to elevate their building above the flood level. For more information, please visit www.floridadisaster.org.

FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES. Prior to a storm, take measures to protect property from flooding.

- Retrofit buildings with storm shutters and reinforced garage doors
- Report drainage problems to Public Works Customer Service at (941)240-8050
- Retrofit your property by regrading the property or elevating your house.
- Elevate air handlers, electrical boxes, and water heaters (permits required).
- Position sandbags, unopened bags of soil additive or garden mulch and boarding over structural openings to attempt to divert flood waters (garden mulch is also usable for landscaping after the flood event).

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM. Visit the City's website and select the icon titled "North Port's Community Notification System" to enroll in our early warning notification system – CodeRED. Tune into local TV (Weather Channel - cable channel 31) and radio channels (FM 92.1, 91.7, 100.7, and AM 1320, 1530) for flood watches and warnings or purchase a NOAA weather alert radio. Alerts can give you time to prepare. You can also check the City's website on disaster planning: <http://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/fire-rescue/emergency-management> and flood warning at <http://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information/flood-warning>

- Hurricane Watches are posted 48 hours prior to the onset of hurricane force winds - 74mph
- Tropical Storm Watches are posted 48 hours prior to the onset of tropical storm force winds – 39mph

FLOOD SAFETY. Remember: If your life or the lives of others are in imminent danger, call 911!

Have your electricity turned off by the power company: Call FPL, (800) 468-8243, to request service. Do not use appliances that have been in water. Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. Be patient. FPL restores power to critical facilities, such as hospitals and water utilities, before individual homes and businesses.

Do not walk through flowing water: Just six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. The water may be contaminated by sewage or infested with snakes and other vermin. Stay away from unstable stream banks.

Do not drive through a flooded area: Roads and bridges may be washed out. Obey road barriers.

Look out for animals and harmful insects. Fire ants and snakes will be looking for dry ground.

Look before you step. Watch for broken glass, nails and slippery surfaces.

Be alert for gas leaks. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames until you know the area has been ventilated.

Evacuate when notified. Evacuate quickly when evacuation order or advisory is issued and have a predetermined evacuation route and destination. Don't forget to have a full tank of gas.

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS OF FLOODPLAINS. Floodplain areas are also recognized as having an intrinsic value of their own as a part of the interconnected ecosystem and an influential role in increasing a community's quality of life. The recognized benefits of a naturally functioning floodplain include the storage and conveyance of flood waters, the recharging of groundwater; the maintenance of surface water quality, and the provision of habitats for fish and wildlife. These areas also provide diverse recreational opportunities, scenic value, and a source of community identity and pride. The existing floodplain along the City's Myakkahatchee Creek, provides a habitat for all forms of fish and wildlife. The City has acquired and continues to acquire much property in this floodplain to preserve the habitat and protect the watershed from pollutants entering the Myakkahatchee Creek, the City's primary drinking water supply.

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS. Always check with the City's Building Division of the Neighborhood Development Services Department and the Department of Public Works before you initiate construction activities, alter the grade, or place fill on your property. A permit may be needed to verify that projects do not cause impacts to other properties. Please help by reporting illegal floodplain development to the City's Building Division.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT/DAMAGE REQUIREMENTS. The NFIP requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, 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 be brought up to the same standards (e.g. if cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged, building must be elevated above the base flood elevation). Please contact the City's Building department for more information on the substantial improvement/damage rules.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE. Do not dump or throw anything into the canals, ditches, inlets, or streams. Dumping is a violation of the City's Illicit Discharge Ordinance 05-47, and the City's Fertilizer Ordinance and Ordinance 2007-45. Grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug channels. A plugged channel cannot carry water when it rains. Each and every piece of trash contributes to flooding. If you see someone dumping debris into canals, ditches, inlets or streams, please contact Public Works Customer Service at (941) 240-8050.

- It is the property owner's responsibility to make sure that the culvert pipe under the properties driveway is clean and free of obstructions. Clogged driveway culverts may cause flooding on your property and on other properties too.
- The City has a maintenance program to remove major blockages, such as downed trees and severe siltation. To report a major blockage, call Public Works Customer Service at (941) 240-8050

CONTACT US. Call Public Works Customer Service at (941) 240-8050 or email PW CustService@cityofnorthport.com for staff to perform a site visit to review the drainage concern and to provide assistance and advice. For additional information on flood protection, please visit the City's Flood Information page at <http://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information>. Following are key City contacts:

Contact	Position	Telephone No.	Fax	E - Mail
Elizabeth Wong	Stormwater Manager Department of Public Works	(941)240-8321	(941)240-8063	ewong@cityofnorthport.com
Eric Tiefenthaler	Emergency Management Coordinator Fire Rescue District	(941)240-8165	(941)240-8182	etiefenthaler@cityofnorthport.com
Anthony Warren	Building Official, Neighborhood Development Services	(941)429-7053	(941)429-7180	awarren@cityofnorthport.com

- Flood maps are on FEMA website: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/search>, or City website at <http://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information/fema-flood-map-updates>.
- Contact FEMA at (877) 336-2627 on flood mapping and NFIP at (800)427-4661 on flood insurance.
- Useful publications on flood protection are at www.fema.gov and at the library website <http://sarac.co.sarasota.fl.us/>.
- Visit the City's webpage on Flood Information <https://www.cityofnorthport.com/government/city-services/public-works/flood-information>. City has a flood information hotline (941)429-1052.