

## ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FLOOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

### YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS BROCHURE BECAUSE YOUR PROPERTY IS IN OR NEAR A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA.

#### History of Flooding in Alameda County.

San Lorenzo Creek, the largest creek within the unincorporated areas of Alameda County, has historically been a major source of flooding. In December 1955, the creek flooded downtown Hayward near Center Street. The creek also flooded a large section of San Lorenzo in April 1958. In February 1998, flood water from Chabot Creek toppled the overbanks near Strobridge Avenue in Castro Valley, downstream of Highway I-580. In the same year, the Castro Valley Creek also overflowed near Watson Street.

Since the construction of a major flood control project from Foothill Boulevard to San Francisco Bay in 1965, no major flooding has been recorded. However, data from a USGS stream gauge station indicates that in February 1998, flood waters came very close to potential overflows along several areas of San Lorenzo Creek. While all of the hazardous flood areas in San Lorenzo Creek, Castro Valley, and Chabot Creek have been studied and the Special Flood Hazard Areas have been mapped, residents living in a flood-prone area are encouraged to take advantage of the National Flood Insurance Program.

#### *What should you do before a flood?*

**Determine if your property is located in an area subject to flooding.** To determine whether or not your property is located within a flood zone as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) you can go to the FEMA website [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov) and use your property address to get the information. Hard copies of the FEMA FIRM are also available for viewing in the Castro Valley Library and (what at

other libraries in the unincorporated area) at the Alameda County Public Works Agency, Building Inspection Department located at 399 Elmhurst Street in Hayward. If a property is located in an "A" Zone, your property is within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), which is an area that has been determined to have the potential for flooding caused by a 100-year storm (a 1% chance of flooding every year). If located in a "V" Zone, your property is also within the SFHA and could also be subject to tidal action. If located in a "X" Zone, your property is not within the SFHA, however the property may still be subject to local drainage problems or other unmapped flood hazard. It is recommended that you consider flood insurance with a rate that is substantially lower than the area designated as "A" and "V" Zone.

#### **Purchase flood insurance on your property.**

Flooding is not covered by a standard homeowner's insurance policy. A separate flood insurance policy is required to cover damages incurred by flooding. Coverage is available for the building itself as well as for the contents of the building. The Alameda County Public Works Agency in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that makes available federally backed flood insurance for all structures, whether or not they are located within the floodplain. Note that there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage goes into effect. More than 25 percent of NFIP claims are filed by properties located outside the 100-year floodplain, also known as the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Contact your insurance agency for more information. Flood insurance information is also available in the Alameda County Public Libraries.

#### **Maintain drainage channels and pipes free of obstruction and debris.**

The Alameda County Public Works Agency performs cleaning and maintenance activities on the drainage channels and pipes in County easements & rights-of-way in accordance with standard operating procedures. Residents are encouraged to assist in maintaining the drainage in their areas by removing or reporting obstructions (such as shopping carts, leaves, debris, trash, etc.). Keeping drainage channels free of obstructions reduces flooding in the event of heavy rains. By way of County ordinance, it is illegal to dump trash, leaves, landscape debris, paint, grease, or any other material into any portion of the County's

drainage system. Such dumping can have devastating impacts on water quality in addition to causing flooding. To report obstructions or illegal dumping, or for questions regarding drainage system maintenance, please contact Alameda County Public Works Agency's Maintenance and Operations Department at (510) 670-5500.

#### **Protect your property from the hazards of flooding and wind.**

Various methods may be used to minimize flooding. If the floor level of your property is lower than the "Base Flood Elevation" (elevation of the 100-year flood, based on the FEMA maps), consider elevating your structure, if possible. If a flood is imminent, property can be protected by sandbagging areas subject to the entry of water into living spaces. Please visit the Agency's website at <http://www.acgov.org/pwa/> for a list of locations where property owners and residents can obtain sand bags. Valuables and furniture may also be moved to higher areas of the dwelling to minimize damages. Attaching plywood or specially made panels over windows and patio doors may help protect against high wind damages associated with heavy rains. Alameda County Public Works Agency will respond to private property owner requests regarding flooding and drainage issues. We also have site specific information for some parcels within the County. For more information go to [www.fema.gov/hazards/floods](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/floods)

**Meet improvement requirements.** The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that if the cost of reconstruction, additions, 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 also be brought up to the same standards. For example, a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged must be elevated above the base flood elevation. Please contact the Building Inspections Division at (510) 670-5440 for more information.

**Meet permitting requirements.** All development within the unincorporated areas of the County requires a permit. Always check and fulfill permitting requirements with the Building Inspections Division at (510) 670-5440 before you build on, alter,

fill, or re-grade on any portion of your property and/or within any easement or right-of-way. Also, call the number above to report any suspected permitting violations.

**Keep an emergency supply.** Non-perishable food, water, batteries, flashlights, a manual can opener, and a battery-operated radio should be kept available.

#### *What should you do during a flood?*

If your property is in imminent danger of flooding, please call 911 or contact PG&E at 10800-743-5000. PG&E recommends that those who evacuate their homes due to flooding should shut off their gas and electricity if they know how and can do so safely. This may prevent gas and electric appliance controls and equipment from being damaged.

#### **To Turn Off The Gas:**

Turn off all gas appliances, or turn off the appliance gas shutoff valve at each appliance.

If unable to shut off gas to appliance, turn off gas at gas service shutoff valve normally located near the gas meter.

#### **To Turn Off The Electricity:**

Turn off the electric supply to the entire premises at the main electric switch.

Warning: Never touch the electric switch or circuit breaker with wet hands or while standing in water.

For more information, visit PG&E's website at: <http://www.pge.com/myhome/edusafety/naturaldisaster/floods/index.shtml> or call 1-800-743-5000 to request that your power and natural gas be shut off, or for guidance on how to do it yourself.

**Tune-In.** In case of an emergency and/or up-to-date weather information, tune-in to your local radio stations:

**CBS: 740 AM or 106.9 FM**

**KGO: 810 AM**

**KPFA: 94.1 FM**

**KALW: 917 FM**

<http://www.acgov.org/emergencysite/>

<http://www.weatherpages.com/bayarea/forecasts.html>

[http://weather.cbs5.com/US/CA/San\\_Francisco.html](http://weather.cbs5.com/US/CA/San_Francisco.html)

Watch for Warning Bulletins and any corresponding emergency and follow evacuating instructions. The County's Office of Emergency Services will order or advise evacuations if conditions warrant this action. If evacuations are called for, it is imperative that you follow instructions in the time frame noted. Emergency information is also posted at: <http://www.acgov.org/emergencysite/>

### ***What should you do after a flood?***

Listen to the radio for emergency instructions.

Avoid driving if possible and never drive through standing water. Unstable banks should be avoided.

Avoid low-lying areas. Seek shelter in the highest areas possible

Develop an evacuation plan for your family

Follow established procedures for property damage repairs:

If you drive through hilly roads during a storm, watch for road hazards (i.e. washed out pavement, trees, power lines, mud, etc.) Check roof drains and down spouts to make sure they are clear of debris.

Keep children away from creeks and large drains which can be deadly during storms.

Keep leaves and yard trimmings out of storm drains and gutters.

Don't forget your pets.

Turn off automatic sprinklers.

Don't store hazardous materials in areas that may be subject to flooding.

Store emergency supplies (first aid kit, essential medicines, cash, food, non-electric can opener, portable radio, flashlights, and spare batteries) in air-tight bags and in handy locations.

Keep your car fueled: if electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate

Alameda County requires contractors to be licensed in their specialty and to have a County Business License. The contractor should be able to produce their licenses. Only licensed electricians may perform electrical work, only licensed plumbers may perform plumbing work, only licensed gas contractors may work on a gas system, only licensed mechanical contractors may perform heating, ventilation and air conditioning work, and only licensed building contractors may perform building related work. Verify that contractors are licensed before signing or agreeing to any repair contracts. It is also recommended that you verify certification of liability and workman's compensation insurance. Complaints against licensed contractors may be referred to the appropriate licensing agency.

Require your contractors to obtain the proper permits for work being performed.

Questions about permits or contractor licensing may be addressed to the Alameda County Public Works Agency Building Inspections Department at (510) 670-5440.

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#### **For more information about flood safety or the NFIP, please note the following:**

<http://www.acgov.org/pwa/>

[www.floodalert.fema.gov](http://www.floodalert.fema.gov)

[www.fema.gov/hazards/floods](http://www.fema.gov/hazards/floods)

1-888-FLOOD29

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*This information is provided by the Alameda County Public Works Agency and is applicable to properties within the limits of the unincorporated areas of the County. If you reside in a jurisdiction other than the unincorporated areas of the County, contact the City in which your property is located for information.*



A Publication for Unincorporated Alameda County Property Owners