

## **Be Ready!**

The Town of Bedford has many resources to help residents deal with emergencies of various types. In most cases, however, YOU, the resident, are the first line of defense against “unplanned events”. One of the best things you can do is EXPECT the UNEXPECTED and prepare for situations which may arise. Planning ahead and having some essential supplies on hand can help you to “weather the storm”, whatever form it may take.

Last September, designated as “Disaster Preparedness Month”, Police Chief Robert Bongiorno and Fire Chief David Grunes published some great suggestions for preparations which everyone can make. To quote Chief Grunes, “We want residents to be prepared for any type of emergency and be proactive in developing a plan that will keep their families and themselves safe ... You don’t want to wait until disaster strikes to make a plan or gather supplies, so it is important to take time now to plan”. All residents are urged to review this article, which may be found [here](#), (on a regular basis) and to follow the recommendations provided.

## **Spring has Sprung! Lamb or Lion?**

March has arrived with cold, blustery weather with strong winds and temperatures in the teens. Does that count as a lamb or a lion? You decide - at least it didn’t snow... In any case spring is right around the corner! The good news is that warmer weather is on the way. The bad news is that this brings increased threats of flooding, whether from April showers or thawing snow melt. Did you know that according to FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States? To help you “be ready” FEMA has designated March 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> as “**Flood Safety Awareness Week**” and published some information and recommendations.

In Bedford we generally see:

1. River Flooding - this is relatively rare and usually occurs after a lot of rain (very heavy and/or over an extended period) in the spring. The flooding that occurs comes on gradually and is usually not a surprise and occurs in the same areas. This gives affected residents some time to prepare.
2. Flash Flooding - this usually occurs late spring and summer due to very heavy rain often associated with thunderstorms. Flash flooding may generate a few inches of rain in an hour. The flooding that occurs comes on very quickly but tends to be very localized.

So, what can you do?

## **Be Ready – for Spring Flooding**

- Be aware of places in and around Bedford with higher risk of flooding. We have a number of rivers and streams meandering through town and nearby streets and low-lying areas may be at higher risk. Know about the types of flood risk in your area. Visit FEMA's Flood Map Service Center [here](#) for maps and other resources.
- If you have had problems in the past you may have one or more sump pumps. It's a good idea to check them BEFORE the rain starts, to be sure they're ready to go. If you have a backup generator, check that too. Don't just start it, connect it to be sure it's actually making electricity!
- Elevate items in the lower levels of your house to prevent damage or move them upstairs.
- Likewise, if you're in or near a flood plain area, consider taking out flood insurance as many basic property insurance policies do not cover flood damage (from groundwater). You can find more info from FEMA [here](#).
- Have a plan - so that you and your family know what to do, where to go, and how to protect yourselves from flooding. In particular, be aware of roads in your area which may be prone to flooding and avoid them if you need to travel.
- Monitor the conditions for flood watches and warnings. Alerts may also be sent to your mobile phone. Click [here](#) for more information on these "Wireless Emergency Alerts".
- Have a "Go Kit" ready if there's a chance you might need to evacuate. The CERT article published in January (you can find it [here](#)) offered some suggestions of items to have on hand in the winter – adjust it as needed to be ready for potential flooding. You can also find more specific suggestions [here](#).
- **Turn around. Don't drown!** Do not walk, swim, or drive through flood waters. Just six inches of fast-moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away. The depth of water is not always obvious and may change rapidly. The road may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
- **Remember:** water and electricity don't mix! Stay clear of any powered wires or electrical equipment (inside or outside) if you're standing in water or on wet ground.

Much more information is available at <https://ready.gov/floods>, and by searching the Bedford Town Website [here](#).

This article is brought to you by Bedford CERT (the Community Emergency Response Team), a volunteer group which supports the Town of Bedford and its emergency response organizations in preventing and mitigating emergencies. Click [here](#) for more information about CERT in Bedford. Watch for future articles to help you to be ready for any emergency which might come your way.