



Flood Health and Safety Guide for Schools and Child Cares

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Executive Summary

Floods and extreme weather events have a unique impact on children, affecting their physical, mental, and social-emotional health. Flood coordination, planning, and training establishes mechanisms to help schools and child care facilities during the recovery phase.

The Flood Health and Safety Guide for Schools and Child Cares is for school administrators and personnel, child care program directors, staff, and family child care providers as they plan and respond to incidents of flooding in Vermont.

Before Flood Events

Flood planning establishes mechanisms that schools and child care facilities can use for recovery after a flood. Schools and child cares should maintain clear, consistent, and regular communication with staff, children, and caregivers, including updates on emergency policies and operations. School and child care staff should understand local flood risks and know how to respond to flood watches and warnings. Stay informed through local news, weather reports, and emergency alerts including the free Vermont Alert "VT-ALERT" on the [Vermont Emergency Management](#) website.

Schools and child care facilities can assess their flood risk by reviewing floodplain maps at their town office or online using the Flood Ready Vermont's Vermont Flood Ready Atlas resource. If you find your facility has some exposure to mapped flood hazards or high-risk Special Flood Hazard areas, consider working with your local town [Emergency Management Director](#) or the Red Cross.

During Flood Events

During flooding events schools and child care facilities should maintain clear, consistent, and regular communication with staff, children, caregivers, and community members, especially regarding changes to policies and operations.

School and child care staff should be aware that there are special considerations for children of all ages, and unique needs and risks for children at different developmental stages. Floods and extreme weather events impact children differently than adults.

After Flood Events

Do not return to your school or child care until officials from your city or town say it is safe, and the water level has gone down. Never return to a school or child care that has visible structural damage such as new cracks, roof problems, or walls that have shifted.

Recovery focuses on returning to safe, normal operations. Return to normal operations could be a long-term process and may also include supporting staff and families with work, education, income stability, and daily routines.

Introduction

This guide was developed with the input and feedback of Vermonters who are experts in emergency management, and public health, practitioners of pediatric medicine, and education professionals. School administrators and personnel, child care program directors, staff, and family child care providers play an important role in keeping children and their caregivers safe. Children may or may not be able to assist with health and safety practices. Children should be encouraged and supported in following the health and safety practices outlined in this guide as developmentally appropriate. To receive the information in this guide in an alternative format or for other accessibility requests, please contact the Injury and Violence Prevention Program, AHS.VDHIjuryandViolencePreventionProgram@vermont.gov.

Background and Objectives

The Flood Health and Safety Guide for Schools and Child Cares provides health and safety best practices to school administrators and personnel, child care program directors, staff, and family child care providers as they plan and respond to incidents of flooding in Vermont. This guide is a collection of health and safety best practices and resources across the State of Vermont Agencies and partners. Health and safety practices outlined in this guide may be applicable to your school or child care. If you have any questions about how considerations outlined in this health and safety guide intersect with other school and child care operations, please reach out the regulatory body that oversees your school or child care.

Health and Safety Considerations

Floods and extreme weather events impact children differently than adults. School and child care staff should be aware that there are special considerations for children of all ages, and unique needs and risks for children at different developmental stages. Remember that teenagers are not adults. It is important to go over flood safety information with teenagers and hold conversations with caregivers about flood preparation as well.

Floodwater

Floodwater Health and Safety Risks

Floodwater presents a significant health and safety risk to both children and adults. It often contains hazardous materials, including human and livestock waste, sharp debris, chemicals, biological and radiological waste, bacteria, and viruses.¹

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Safety Guidelines: Floodwater. <https://www.cdc.gov/floods/safety/floodwater-after-a-disaster-or-emergency-safety.html>

It is crucial to stay away from floodwater and avoid walking or driving through it, as even shallow water can move swiftly and become dangerous. Floodwater can rise quickly and deepen rapidly, posing a drowning risk for people of all ages. Be aware that just six inches of moving floodwater can knock adults down, and two feet can sweep vehicles away. Always prioritize safety and steer clear of floodwater to prevent accidents and health hazards.²

Drowning Prevention and Supervision

Children should never be left alone near any source of water, as even shallow standing water can pose a drowning risk. If a child goes missing, immediately check nearby water sources. Children are naturally curious and may wander off unnoticed, and drowning can occur silently and within seconds. The Department of Health encourages schools and child cares to consider training all staff in CPR and safe rescue techniques to effectively respond to drowning incidents. Even strong, experienced swimmers can be at risk in floodwater.

During rising floodwaters, ideally children would be provided with and wear properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard approved flotation devices that match their height and weight. Life jackets should fit snugly, with all straps fastened, and be worn as instructed. Children wearing life jackets must be supervised by a designated adult who is actively watching them at all times.

Electrical Hazards

Floodwater can also pose an electrocution risk due to fallen power lines, as electricity can travel through water, leading to serious injury or death. It is essential to stay away from fallen power lines and never touch them or drive through standing water if power lines are present. During clean up activities, always avoid power lines.¹

In the event of flooding inside your child care, family care home, or school, ensure the electricity, natural gas, and propane tanks are turned off to prevent fire, electrocution, and explosions. Never return to a flooded school or child care facility unless you have confirmation that the power has been safely turned off.¹

Preventing Illness from Floodwater

If entering floodwater is necessary, wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles to protect yourself.¹ Exposure to floodwater can lead to rashes, illness, and severe infections. If children come into contact with floodwater, school and child care staff should assist them in washing their hands with soap and clean hot water. It is important to wash all areas of skin that have been exposed to floodwater as soon as possible. If soap and clean water are unavailable, use wipes or sanitizer. For children under 24 months use non-alcohol-based sanitizer and wipes. Clothing contaminated by flood or sewage water should be washed in hot water with detergent. Avoid eating or drinking anything that has been in contact with

² Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles. Flooded Roads. <https://dmv.vermont.gov/enforcement-and-safety/road-safety/flooded-roads>

floodwater, as this poses a high risk of diarrheal disease. If a child consumes contaminated food or drink, contact a medical provider immediately if they exhibit serious symptoms such as dehydration, a fever lasting more than 24 to 48 hours, bloody stools, vomiting lasting more than 12 to 24 hours, green or bloody vomit, a swollen or painful stomach, refusal to eat or drink, or a rash or yellowing of the skin or eyes.³

School, child care staff, and children should frequently wash their hands, especially before eating or drinking, to minimize the risk of E. coli and Salmonella infections.¹ Prevent children from playing in floodwater areas, using toys contaminated by floodwater, or bathing in contaminated municipal or natural bodies of water.

Road Safety

Avoid driving through floodwater. If you encounter a flooded road, turn around and find an alternative route. Always adhere to road closures and follow detours, never bypassing barriers. Check [New England 511](#) for updates on road accessibility, as it provides regular information on closures and route changes during flooding.

Before a storm arrives, fill up your gas tank or fully charge your electric vehicle to prepare for potential evacuation, as power outages may make it difficult to find operating gas or charging stations.

Just two feet of moving water can sweep away most vehicles, including pickup trucks and SUVs. During a flood, you cannot accurately assess the water's depth or the condition of the road beneath, which may be damaged or obscured by debris. Teenagers should be advised never to drive during flooding events, and driving at night should be avoided when flood dangers are harder to detect.²

Never drive through standing water if fallen power lines are present. If a power line falls on your car while driving, stay inside and carefully drive away from the line.²

If caught in floodwater and your car engine stalls, keep the ignition on and call emergency services for safe removal.⁴ Six inches of floodwater can reach the bottom of most passenger vehicles, causing loss of control and stalling. Even shallow water can float a car.² If your car stops in floodwater, exit and move to higher ground, as rapidly rising water may engulf the vehicle and endanger passengers. Children's car seats are not designed to float and should not be used as flotation devices. If a car seat contacts floodwater, discard it, as cleaning soft

³ American Academy of Pediatrics. HealthyChildren.org. Diarrhea in Children: What Parents Need to Know. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Diarrhea.aspx>

⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What to Do to Protect Yourself From Electrical Hazards. <https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/response/what-to-do-protect-yourself-from-electrical-hazards.html>

materials from contaminants is impossible.⁵ For more information, visit the [Be Seat Smart website](#) for regional resources.

Landslide Safety

Vermont's landscape, with its beautiful mountains and valleys, is susceptible to landslides and mudslides, especially during heavy rains. These events occur when rock, mud, or debris move down a slope, with steep slopes being particularly vulnerable.⁶ Any mountain or hill can experience a landslide, and previous landslides can be a key indicator of susceptible areas. Even minor slope movement can cause significant damage, such as compromising septic, sewer, and water lines and displacing structural foundations.⁷

A sudden change in water level on a creek or stream may indicate a landslide upstream. By the time a landslide is certain, it may be too late to escape safely.^{6,8} If your school or child care is in a landslide prone area, consider evacuating if there is excessive rain in the forecast, such as flash flood warnings. Moving to high ground away from the landslide's path is the best protection. If evacuation is not possible, take cover under sturdy furniture like a desk or table.⁸ Limit use of playgrounds or recreational areas at the base of steep slopes during and after heavy rain, as soils may remain unstable.

Never cross roads with flowing water or mud and avoid walking in deep mud. Do not cross bridges if a landslide is suspected or visible. Stay alert while driving. Roadways next to steep slopes and rivers have higher risk for landslides. Watch for collapsed roads, blockages, and debris hazards.⁶

Clean Up Precautions

Limit children's and teenagers' involvement in flood clean up efforts to minimize exposure to contaminants. They can be affected through direct skin contact, inhaling hazardous particles and fumes, or putting their hands in their mouths.⁹ Clean and disinfect toys, clothing, and living spaces. Discard belongings that have been submerged or severely contaminated, including soft or absorbent toys. Non-absorbent toys should be disinfected for safety. Dispose of baby bottles, nipples, and pacifiers that have contacted floodwater or debris.

⁵ American Academy of Pediatrics Healthy Children. Car Seats: Information for Families. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families>.

⁶ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Landslide and Mudslides and Your Safety. <https://www.cdc.gov/landslides-and-mudslides/about/index.html>

⁷ American Red Cross. Landslide Safety. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/landslide.html>

⁸ Ready. Landslides & Debris Flow. <https://www.ready.gov/landslides-debris-flow>

⁹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. Protecting Children in Aftermath of Hurricanes and Floods. <https://www.epa.gov/children/protecting-children-aftermath-hurricanes-and-floods>

Generally, metal and glazed ceramic items can be sanitized and kept, but wood items, being absorbent, should be discarded.⁹

Adults and staff involved in clean up activities should use personal protective equipment, including gloves, eye protection, N95 masks, and other necessary gear. Older teens may assist with minor clean up tasks if supervised by an adult and wearing protective gear, including long pants and shirts. Always wash hands and any skin that has contacted contaminants with soap and water. If your water supply is compromised, use cooled boiled or disinfected water, especially if relying on a private source without immediate notice.⁹

Avoid damaged buildings or structures until they are inspected and certified safe by authorities. Open cuts or sores should not be exposed to floodwater; if contact occurs, clean the area promptly with soap and apply antibiotic ointment.¹⁰ Monitor cuts for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or pus.¹¹

Debris

After floodwaters recede, debris remains a significant health and safety risk for both children and adults, impacting community well-being. Floods can change Vermont's landscape and rivers, leaving behind unwanted natural and human-made debris. It is important to report debris on local roads, rights-of-way, public buildings, and facilities to your town authorities.^{12,13} Following a flood event, most debris can be disposed of in a single container. However, avoid mixing chemicals or pouring them down drains or onto the ground. For disposal recommendations, contact your [local Solid Waste Management Entity](#).¹⁴

¹⁰ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for Cleaning Safely After a Disaster. <https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/safety/index.html>

¹¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for Personal Hygiene During an Emergency. <https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/safety/guidelines-for-personal-hygiene-during-an-emergency.html>

¹² Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources After a Flood - River and Stream Debris Management. https://anr.vermont.gov/sites/anr/files/documents/anr-dec-flood-river-debris-management_0.pdf

¹³ Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Dealing with Debris 101. https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Planning-for-Tomorrow's-Flood/CPR-VERI-Toolkit-Debris.pdf?_gl=1*tsb7sb*_ga*MjUwMzc4NzY3LjE3MDU0MzIzOTc.*_ga_V9WQH77KLW*_czE3NDk0Nzk5MTk5MzEwMyRnMSR0MTc0OTQ4MTE3NCRqMjkkbDAkaDA.

¹⁴ Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Reducing Disaster Debris. https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Planning-for-Tomorrow's-Flood/CPR-VERI-Toolkit-ReducingDebris.pdf?_gl=1*15z2ogn*_ga*MjUwMzc4NzY3LjE3MDU0MzIzOTc.*_ga_V9WQH77KLW*_czE3NDk0Nzk5MTk5MzEwMyRnMSR0MTc0OTQ4MTE3NiRqMickbDAkaDA.

Separate out hazardous items from the trash including:

- Acids.
- Aerosol cans.
- Batteries.
- Brake cleaner.
- Chemicals.
- Drain cleaner.
- Electronics.
- Explosives.
- Gasoline.
- Large applicants.
- Mercury products.
- Most automative products.
- Oil.
- Paints.
- Pesticides.
- Propane and gas cylinders.
- Scrap metal.
- Tires.
- Toxic cleaners.
- Unprotected sharp objects.¹⁵

Chemical or Fuel Spills

Flooding can cause heating fuel tanks to topple over and spill onto the ground or in a basement. If you notice any signs of oil contamination such as oil product or a sheen on standing water, strong petroleum odors inside a structure, dead vegetation in areas where basements were pumped out, or mud or silt that is contaminated with petroleum, oil, or other hazardous material stay away from the area. If a spill of hazardous materials is observed during or following a flood event, call the State of Vermont Spill Program on weekdays during the hours of 7:45am to 4:30pm (802-828-1138). If a spill requires immediate mitigation or is noted after the business hours provided above, call the 24-hour HAZMAT Hotline (1-800-641-5005).

Spills should be reported immediately by phone to the Spill Program or the HAZMAT Hotline, A Spill Program member will provide direction related to spill containment, clean up, and the proper management of clean up materials for smaller spills. For larger spills (and when a flood event is a declared disaster), the Spill Program can assign an environmental cleanup

¹⁵ Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. ANR Flood Debris Cleanup Guidance.
<https://anr.vermont.gov/document/anr-flood-debris-cleanup-guidance>

contractor to respond. For pathogen-contaminated mud or silt, contact a local septic hauler for disposal services.¹⁶

Mold

If your school or child care facility has been flooded and has not dried out within 24 to 48 hours, assume mold is present. Mold, a type of fungi, can grow wherever there is moisture, affecting food, building materials, upholstery, clothes, and other materials like dust and soap residue. Exposure to mold can impact health, and regardless of the type or amount, the steps to address it are the same: remove moldy items, dry out the space, and fix the source of water intrusion.

When entering a mold-affected area, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long sleeves, waterproof work boots, rubber gloves, goggles, and a disposable N95 respirator. Children should not assist in clean up, especially in moldy areas, and should avoid staying in heavily water-damaged buildings, as these require extensive repair to remove mold completely.⁹ Dry buildings as soon as safely possible by opening all doors and windows, including interior doors and attic access, to allow airflow. Use fans once electricity is safe. Clean non-absorbent moldy items like glass, plastic, marble, granite, ceramic tile, and metal with soap and water, then disinfect surfaces that contacted floodwater.

Discard materials that easily absorb water, such as mattresses, cushions, stuffed animals, baby toys, foam-rubber items, books, and carpet. If a child's car seat or restraint system is exposed to floodwater, throw it away. Wash clothes and fabrics, including those worn during clean up, in hot water with detergent. Use a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum for cleaning. Before activating heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems, have them checked and cleaned by a professional experienced in mold clean up.

Recreation After Flooding

After a flood, hazardous conditions can persist for several days, even if they are not immediately visible. School and child care staff should take extra precautions to ensure children's health and safety.

Swimming or Boating

Avoid swimming in any body of water for at least 48 hours following significant rain. Flooding requires additional recovery time for water bodies. Surface waters like lakes, ponds, and rivers may contain debris, contaminants, and pathogens, such as viruses and bacteria, which can cause illness or injury. These waters are especially susceptible to disease-causing

¹⁶ Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Spill Management. <https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/spill-management>

microorganisms and chemicals from stormwater runoff after flooding. Floodwater also carries excess nutrients and sediments, further reducing water quality.

Swimming in these waters can lead to health issues such as skin rashes, sore throats, diarrhea, or more serious problems. Even if areas are not posted with warnings, avoid water recreation, including wading, boating, swimming, and fishing, until flows return to normal levels. Wait until the water is clear and calm, and exercise caution. Adults and children should stay out of rivers and streams until conditions improve and be cautious when swimming in lakes and ponds affected by flooding. Floods can create dangerous conditions in swim holes, streams, rivers, and waterfalls. If boating on lakes at high water levels, move at slower speeds to reduce shoreline erosion. Be aware that high water conditions and strong undercurrents can persist for days after a storm. Always assess water depth and flow before swimming or boating.

Hiking

Before hiking, check the status of your planned location on the [Agency of Natural Resources Vermont State Parks](#) website for updates and safety alerts. Confirm road accessibility with [New England 511](#), which provides regular updates on closures and route changes.

Remember, children should never be left alone near any source of water, as shallow standing water can pose a drowning risk. If a child goes missing, immediately check nearby water sources. Children are naturally curious and may wander off unnoticed, with drowning occurring silently and within seconds. The Department of Health encourages all school and child care staff to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and safe rescue techniques to effectively respond to drowning incidents.

Evacuation Policy and Planning

The Department of Health encourages schools and child cares to consider having a current and accessible evacuation protocol. This includes maintaining clear, consistent, and regular communication with staff, children, and caregivers, including updates on policies and operations. As well as informing caregivers about evacuation sites and protocols.¹⁷

All child care programs should have an Emergency Response Plan to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Child Care Licensing Regulations require licensed and regulated programs to have a written plan approved by the CDD Child Care Licensing Unit updated annually.¹⁷

¹⁷ Vermont Department for Children and Families Child Development Division. Emergency Response and Recovery Planning Guide for Child Care Providers. https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Safety/Emergency-Response-Guide.pdf?_gl=1*1vwwvs6*_ga*MjUwMzc4NzY3LjE3MDU0MzIzOTc.*_ga_V9WQH77KLW*czE3NTYyMjAzNDYkbzE1MSRnMSR0MTc1NjlyMTA0MiRqNjAkbdAkaDA.

Public supervisory unions, supervisory districts, and independent schools must have an annually updated All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for each site, following the Vermont School Safety Center template. A reunification plan should be a part of a school's EOP. Refer to your reunification protocol in your school's EOP and follow your school's evacuation policy and planning procedures.¹⁸ Consider the following health and safety practices and if you have questions about how these considerations intersect with other school operations, please reach out to the regulatory body that oversees your school.

Monitor community notification systems and follow local guidance if a storm is approaching, which may include canceling schools and child care in advance of expected flooding or severe weather.

Register for Vermont Alert "VT-ALERT" on the [Vermont Emergency Management website](#). VT-ALERT is a free messaging service used by state and local responders to notify Vermonters of emergencies, including evacuation information, severe weather advisories, boil water notices, and roadway interruptions. Notifications can be tailored to specific locations and types of alerts.¹⁹

If using vehicles for evacuation, fill up your gas tank or fully charge your electric vehicle early, as power outages can limit access to gas stations and charging stations. If rising water threatens your school or child care, evacuate immediately to higher ground.

Select an assembly area at a safe distance from the facility. If safe, turn off the electrical circuit breaker box in your facility. If outdoor gathering is unsafe, move children to the safest available indoor location. Choose at least two alternate evacuation sites in different directions. Develop a plan to transport children using federally approved car seats or child restraint systems, and obtain caregiver permission for emergency transport. If a child's car seat or restraint system is exposed to floodwater, throw it away. If you are unable to transport children during an emergency, work with your local town [Emergency Management Director](#) to ensure they are aware of this challenge. The Emergency Management Director is an appointed individual in each town or city who helps organize and coordinate the local emergency response. Contact them to help plan for emergencies and evacuation needs.¹⁷

Ensure all evacuation routes inside and around the facility are clear. Post a current plan with at least two evacuation routes on each level of the building, including locations within walking distance that are open during operational hours.¹⁷ Dress children appropriately for the weather, but prioritize evacuation speed. During extreme temperatures, be mindful of

¹⁸ Vermont Department of Public Safety Vermont School Safety Center. School All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan Template and Guide. <https://schoolsafety.vermont.gov/planning/school-emergency-operations-plan>

¹⁹ Vermont Emergency Management. Vermont Alert. <https://vem.vermont.gov/vtalert>

outdoor dangers.²⁰ Adjust evacuation sites seasonally to provide better shelter from harsh weather conditions.

Designate staff to assist infants, small children, and those needing extra help during evacuation. Implement a system to account for all children, including frequent headcounts and clear staff responsibilities.¹⁷ Children are naturally curious and may wander off, so ensure they are closely monitored.

Children and Staff Considerations

School administrators, child care program directors, staff, and family child care providers should understand the unique impact of floods on children, affecting their physical, mental, and social-emotional health. It is crucial to consider the specific health and safety needs of children across different developmental stages, as well as the needs of children with special health and educational requirements.

Social-Emotional Health

Trusted adults play a vital role in helping children and youth cope with traumatic experiences after a flood. Collective stress can affect the psychological and physical health of both children and staff. Provide opportunities for everyone to share their feelings and engage caregivers to understand their concerns. Collaborate with caregivers to identify those needing assistance with food, clothing, and other basic needs.

Children cope better when they understand what has happened and how they can protect themselves and their loved ones. Encourage questions and provide direct, honest answers. Share information without unnecessary details, offering concrete explanations for younger children. Reassure them by explaining the community's recovery efforts and safety measures. For older children, offer additional information while avoiding graphic details and disturbing content.²¹

Recognizing Changes

Be aware of social-emotional changes in children, such as withdrawn behavior, depression, fear, sleep disturbances, and anxious attachment. Older children may change patterns of tobacco, alcohol, and substance use. Staff may also exhibit withdrawn behavior, depression, feelings of inadequacy, difficulty concentrating, and substance use.¹⁷

Despite efforts to support and reassure, some may continue experiencing symptoms indicating a need for professional consultation. Contact your community's Mental Health

²⁰ United States Environmental Protection Agency. Protecting Children in Aftermath of Hurricanes and Floods. <https://www.epa.gov/children/protecting-children-aftermath-hurricanes-and-floods>

²¹ American Academy of Pediatrics. HealthyChildren.org. Talking With Children About Disasters. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Pages/Talking-to-Children-about-Disasters.aspx>

Designated Agency for resources. Visit the [Department of Mental Health Designated and Special Services Agencies](#) website for more information.

Encourage individuals to call or text the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 for immediate counseling. This free, confidential, multilingual crisis support service connects people with trained professionals from crisis counseling centers, offering confidential counseling, referrals, and support services.²²

Children with Special Health and Educational Needs

Ensuring the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of every child is a priority for schools and child care facilities, especially for those with complex chronic health conditions and developmental diagnoses. Schools and child care providers should engage in thoughtful planning with caregivers and experts, focusing on mental health and social-emotional support.

Planning and Support

During any emergency, children with special health and educational needs are likely to have encountered disruption or complete cessation, to their supervision and support environment, availability of medical care, access to communications, transportation resources, and independence. Therapeutic, residential, and other alternative or independent school settings may require special considerations during emergencies. Emergency response plans should consider the needs of students, youth, and staff who are vulnerable to interruption in their supervision or support environment, availability of medical care, access to communications, transportation resources, and independence.

In these cases, a team-based approach to emergency response and individual care is recommended. Teams may include special educators, school nurses, the student's health care provider, Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members, parents, caregivers, teachers and paraprofessionals as appropriate.

Team Goals and Emergency Plans

Teams should develop shared goals to achieve safe, effective, child-centered, timely, and efficient care. Incorporate school nurse-developed Emergency Care Plans for children with special health needs, including guidance on care during emergencies and necessary evacuation precautions.

²² Vermont Department of Mental Health. Resources in Response to the Flooding in Vermont. <https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/flood>

Pre-Flood Planning

Before flooding events, hold discussions with caregivers to understand medication, power supply, and transportation needs during emergencies. Encourage caregivers to notify emergency medical services (EMS) in advance of any special health care needs so responders are informed before an emergency occurs. Planning for situations where a child may become more vulnerable is essential.

Communication and Accessibility

Knowing a child's needs is crucial when communicating with emergency medical services and first responders. Child care providers must notify emergency personnel if a child has specific health needs, such as medical equipment requiring electricity. Review emergency and evacuation plans to ensure exits are wheelchair accessible, including ramps if elevators are non-functional.¹⁷

Feeding Infants

Breastfeeding and Chestfeeding Infants

During and following a flood, for breastfed and chestfed infants, continuing to provide breast milk should be a priority. When available, continued access to refrigeration can safely store expressed breast milk. Breast milk contains antibodies to protect infants from diarrhea and respiratory infections that can be common following a flood. Develop a plan with parents for situations when breast milk and chest milk become unavailable. If formula is needed, have parents specify the brand and type to use. Ready-to-feed infant formulas are the safest option following a flood, as it does not require water but does require refrigeration after opening. Monitor updates from local authorities regarding water safety, as tap or well water may be unsafe for mixing with powdered formula.

Formula Feeding

Ready-to-feed formulas can be given directly to infants without adding water. If using powdered formula, mix it with safe water that has been boiled or use bottled water. Use prepared formula within one hour of feeding and within two hours of preparation. After two hours, any leftover milk must be labeled as expired, refrigerated, and returned to the caregiver who should use the milk within 24 hours.

Safe Feeding Practices

It is important to always wash hands prior to feeding infants. If safe water is not available, adults can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. When safe water is not available, bottles and nipples may be unsafe because they cannot be cleaned properly. Use disposable cups for feeding, discarding each cup after use. Do not refrigerate leftover formula for later use.

Breast Milk Storage During Power Outages

In a power outage, breast and chest milk can be stored in a closed refrigerator (40°F or below) for 4 hours, a half-full freezer (0°F or below) for 24 hours, and a full freezer for 48 hours. Before an outage, fill freezer space with crumpled newspaper, gel packs, or water containers, leaving room for expansion and avoiding glass bottles. Once power is restored, keep frozen breast and chest milk if ice crystals are visible. If thawed but still cold, refrigerate and use within 24 hours. Discard breast and chest milk left in the refrigerator for more than 24 hours or completely thawed milk that is no longer cold.²³

Flood Coordination, Planning, and Training

Flood coordination, planning, and training establishes mechanisms to help schools and child care facilities during the recovery phase. Recovery involves efforts to return to normal operations, and staff and children return to a normal routine as soon as possible. Safe environments for children are essential for children's health. Depending on the amount of damage, returning to normal operations could be a long-term process and may include assisting caregivers with resuming work activities, accessing education, reducing the risks of income loss for staff, and supporting economic stability.¹⁷

School Emergency Plans

All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plans

Public Supervisory Unions, Supervisory Districts, and Independent Schools must have an annually updated All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for each site, following the Vermont School Safety Center template. Schools should collaborate with first responders and local emergency management officials to develop these plans, leveraging their expertise in local emergency resources and high-risk hazards.²⁴ If you are unfamiliar with the first responder organizations in your area, contact your municipal office and ask to speak with the [Emergency Management Director](#). For more information about requirements for EOPs, review the Agency of Education [Act 29: Emergency Operations Plan](#) website.

²³ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency. <https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/foods/keep-food-safe-after-emergency.html>

²⁴ Vermont Department of Public Safety Vermont School Safety Center. School All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan Template and Guide. <https://schoolsafety.vermont.gov/planning/school-emergency-operations-plan>

Child Care Emergency Plans

Emergency Response Plans

All child care programs must have an Emergency Response Plan to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Child Care Licensing Regulations require licensed and regulated programs to have a written plan approved by the CDD Child Care Licensing Unit updated annually. Criteria for these plans are outlined in the Child Care Licensing Regulations for each program type.¹⁷ Programs can consult their local town [Emergency Management Director](#) to identify and implement improvements to their Emergency Response Plan.

Communication and Training

Include a review of the emergency response plan in each staff member's orientation. Ensure parents are informed about the plan, especially evacuation procedures. Use newsletters, emails, and meetings to communicate updates, and gather feedback from caregivers, and staff to strengthen the plan.¹⁷

Preparing for a Flood

School administrators, child care program directors, staff, and family child care providers should be aware of flood risks and know how to respond to flood watch and warning. Understanding the difference is crucial: a flood watch indicates a flood is possible, while a flood warning means a flood is imminent or occurring. Stay informed by listening to local news and weather reports and paying attention to emergency alerts.²⁵

Register for Vermont Alert "VT-ALERT" on the [Vermont Emergency Management](#) website. This free messaging service notifies Vermonters of emergencies, including evacuation information, severe weather advisories, boil water notices, and roadway interruptions. Notifications can be customized for specific locations and alert types.²⁰

Schools and child care facilities can assess their flood risk by reviewing floodplain maps at their town office or online using the [Flood Ready Vermont's Vermont Flood Ready Atlas](#) resource. If you find your school or child care facility has some exposure to mapped flood hazards or exposure to high-risk Special Flood Hazard areas, consider working with your local town [Emergency Management Director](#) or the Red Cross as needed. The Emergency Management Director is an appointed individual in each town or city who helps organize and

²⁵ Vermont Emergency Management. Floods. <https://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness/floods>

coordinate the local emergency response. Contact them to help plan for emergencies and evacuation needs.^{17,26}

Staff Preparedness

Ensure all staff understand the dangers of flooding and are familiar with the facility's emergency plans and procedures. Training and practicing the emergency plan will help ensure its effectiveness and clarify staff responsibilities during an emergency.¹⁷

Before flooding occurs, if safe, move important items to upper floors or high shelves. Bring outdoor equipment like trash cans and lawn furniture inside or secure them tightly. Store items that can float in areas unlikely to flood. If possible, relocate vehicles to higher ground.¹⁴ Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water for drinking, washing, and flushing toilets.

Emergency Supplies

Schools and child care facilities should consider maintaining an inventory of emergency supplies sufficient for at least 72 hours. Develop an emergency supply checklist, ensuring all items are dated to prevent expiration. Consider children's medical and special care needs when assembling your inventory. Staff should store their personal necessity items safely at the facility.

Emergency Evacuation Backpacks

Consider keeping ready-to-go emergency evacuation backpacks. Schools and larger child care facilities should consider having backpacks for each classroom, containing supplies tailored to the children's needs. Ensure backpacks are lightweight to avoid slowing staff down during evacuation.

Go Bags

School nurses should consider preparing a [school nurse go bag](#) for emergencies and possible relocation of students. Go bags should include key information such as the destination of any off-site student holding areas, list of students' health needs with access to emergency action plans (EAP), and emergency contact details for staff trained in first aid, CPR, and Stop the Bleed. Go bags should also include maps of the school and contact information for local emergency services and healthcare providers. Supplies should reflect the known health needs of students and staff, including medications like epinephrine, glucose, and individual emergency prescriptions, with backups for extended situations. The bag should also contain basic first aid supplies, including items to control severe bleeding, splint materials, shock blankets, and equipment to check vital signs.

²⁶ Floody Ready. Vermont Flood Ready Atlas. https://floodready.vermont.gov/assessment/vt_floodready_atlas

Preparing for Post-Flood Conditions

Following a flood, access to food, water, or electricity may be limited for several days.¹⁷ Preparing emergency kits is crucial for maintaining safety and health during a disaster. Consider your facility's unique needs, including medical conditions, when assembling your kit. [Vermont Emergency Management has multilingual resources](#) on building an emergency kit that can be shared with caregivers.

Basic Emergency Supply Kit

A basic emergency supply kit should include the following recommended items:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Prescription and over the counter medications.
- First aid kit.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Comfort items for children like stuffed animals or games.
- Manual can opener for food.
- Local maps.
- Cell phone with charger, inverter, or solar charger.²⁷

Multilingual Resources for Caregivers

Ensure all communication efforts with caregivers are culturally sensitive. It is essential to provide the same level of communication for caregivers whose primary language is not English. Offer written and oral communications in accessible formats, with multiple languages and translation services available upon request.

According to Child Care Licensing Regulations, emergency contact phone numbers must include a translator's number if applicable. In case of evacuation, child care providers should carry the translator's contact number with them.¹⁷

Multilingual printable flood health and safety information is accessible through the [Vermont Department of Health website](#). Additionally, multilingual flood safety videos are available via the [Vermont Language Justice Project](#).

²⁷ Department of Public Safety Vermont Emergency Management. Build a Preparedness Kit. <https://vem.vermont.gov/preparedness/kit>

Classroom and Operational Considerations

Floodwater in and around your school or child care can cause injuries and health problems. Do not return to your school or child care until officials from your city or town say it is safe, and the water level has gone down. Never return to a school or child care that has visible structural damage such as new cracks, roof problems, or walls that have shifted.

Power Outages

Have a licensed electrician inspect your electrical system before you once again occupy your school or child care if it has been flooded.²⁸ Never touch electrical circuits or equipment that were submerged in floodwater and never enter standing water to access your facility's main power switch or to turn power on or off. Only turn power on or off from a dry location. All electrical equipment should be completely dry before it is used. After restoring power, shut the power off immediately if you see frayed wiring or sparks or smell the odor of something burning.²⁷ If you smell natural gas (a sulfur or rotten egg smell) or hear hissing leave the building immediately and call your local utility company.

If you suspect a child or staff member has experienced an electric shock, call emergency medical help immediately. Be cautious, as the person may still be in contact with the electrical source and touching them could electrocute you. Turn off the electrical source or move the source away using a non-conductive object like wood, cardboard, or plastic. Perform CPR if necessary. Avoid touching burns, blisters, or removing burned clothing. If the person is faint, pale, or showing signs of shock, lay them down with their head slightly lower than their torso and elevate their legs while waiting for emergency services.²⁷

Generator Safety

If your power goes out and you need to use a generator, follow these steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock, electrocution, fire, and burns. First, read the owner's manual and adhere to all labels. Never operate a generator in an attached garage, basement, or crawlspace. Always use it outdoors, placing it more than 20 feet away from windows, doors, or vents, and direct the exhaust away from buildings. Ensure there is 3 feet to 4 feet of clear space around the generator for proper ventilation.²⁹ Use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is at least 20 feet long, checking it frequently for damage and replacing it as needed. The wattage capacity of the cord should exceed the total wattage of all connected appliances. Plug items directly into the generator or extension cord and never connect the generator to a wall outlet or your facility's electrical circuits. If the generator is active when power is restored, it can pose a serious fire hazard.²⁶ Keep

²⁸ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What to Do to Protect Yourself from Electrical Hazards. <https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/response/what-to-do-protect-yourself-from-electrical-hazards.html>

²⁹ Electrical Safety Foundation International. Generator Safety. Accessed through Vermont Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Safety. <https://firesafety.vermont.gov/sites/firesafety/files/documents/ESFI-Generator-Safety.pdf>

generators dry, avoid operating them when wet, and turn them off to cool before refueling. Always dry your hands before handling a generator. Store fuel in labeled containers outside living areas.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention

Young children and infants are particularly sensitive to carbon monoxide. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning often resemble flu-like signs, including headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, and vomiting. Additional symptoms may include sleepiness, blurred vision, ringing in the ears, breathing difficulties, and confusion. Inhaling large amounts of carbon monoxide can cause unconsciousness or even death. Even low-level exposure over several hours can be as dangerous as high-level exposure for a short time. If symptoms disappear when you leave your school or child care facility but return upon re-entry, there might be a carbon monoxide issue. Immediately go outside for fresh air and call 9-1-1 if your carbon monoxide alarm sounds or if you suspect poisoning in a child or staff member.

Water and Wastewater Considerations

Water Service Outages in Child Care Programs

You have the option to continue providing care during water service outages, but only if certain conditions are met:

- Toilets must be operational, even if flushed manually.
- Safe drinking water must be readily available.
- Hand washing with warm water and soap must be accessible.
- Food must be safely stored and readily available.

If any of these conditions are not met, the child care program should not operate, as doing so would violate essential health and safety regulations designed to protect children's welfare.³⁰

Types of Water Supply

Your school or child care facility may be supplied by a privately-owned water source or a public water system. The source of water impacts how information about your water is communicated to you and your responsibilities when there is a water service outage or biological or chemical contamination in your water.

³⁰ Vermont Department for Children and Families. Guidance and Resources for Programs Impacted by Rain and Flooding. <https://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd-blog/guidance-and-resources-programs-impacted-rain-and-flooding>

If your school or child care facility purchases water from a public water supply, information regarding water service outages and the safety of your water supply will be communicated by the water system.

If your facility has its own water source and serves 25 or more people (including students and staff), your water system is regulated as a Public Non-Transient Non-Community water system by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Facilities with this water system should notify the [Department of Environmental Conservation](#) of water service outages and the Department of Environmental Conservation will communicate required actions to protect the health of your users.

If your facility has its own water source and serves less than 25 people, the water system is classified as private. Facilities with this water system should contact the Vermont Department of Health Private Well Program (802-863-7220 or 800-439-8550 toll-free in Vermont or email AHS.VDHEnvHealth@vermont.gov.) for assistance regarding water service outages and chemical or biological contamination in your water.³¹

Public Water Supply

Flooding can compromise public water infrastructure leading to biological or chemical drinking water contamination. Look for public announcements regarding water service outages and the safety of your system's water supply. Follow instructions in notification documents when it comes to activities like handwashing, dishwashing, preparing or cooking food, making ice, brushing teeth, or when preparing infant formula. Depending on the type and extent of the contamination, your public water system may be required to distribute notice informing users of the need to either boil the water (Boil Water Notice) or informing users, including identified subsets of the population not to drink the water (Do Not Drink notice). These notices will remain in place until there is no longer a public health risk from contamination. If your public water system has implemented a Boil Water notice or Do Not Drink notice affecting your location, you should receive notice from the water system with specific information on the situation and guidance on how to proceed.³¹

Public and Private Drinking Water Sources

During and after flooding events, onsite water sources including wells, springs, and surface water intakes can become contaminated with microorganisms and chemicals that can cause serious illnesses. Water may not be safe to use for drinking, making ice, cooking, or cleaning after a flood until it has been tested by a Vermont certified laboratory and treated accordingly. If your school or child care is served by a well or spring and floodwater has reached your well or spring, assume your water is contaminated. If you did not see the area around the well during the flood, look for debris and mud in the area and water or mud

³¹ Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Public Water Notices. <https://anr.vermont.gov/document/public-water-notices>

stains on the well or in a spring. These are signs that your system was flooded. If your water smells sweet, like fuel, or chemicals, do not drink it until you can have the water tested and confirm that it is absent of contamination.³¹

Public Drinking Water Sources

If your child care program is regulated as a public drinking water system, notify the Department of Environmental Conservation of emergency situations that may have resulted in water service outage or contamination by completing the [online Agency of Natural Resources Emergency Reporting Form](#). A Department of Environmental Conservation staff member will contact the school or child care program representative to identify next steps, which may include a Boil Water notice requirement, a Do Not Drink notice requirement, and water quality testing.³¹

Private Drinking Water Sources

If your school or child care program is a private water system, do not use the water from your well or spring until you have it tested and results indicate that the water meets all necessary water quality standards. In the meantime, use bottled water or water from an alternate source that is of adequate water quality. Well water testing kits can be [purchased online through the Vermont Department of Health](#).³¹

Boil Water Notice

When a public drinking water system distributes a Boil Water notice to users, all water must be boiled before use. Bring all water to a boil for at least one minute and then allow water to cool before use. You can also use bottled water if you are unable to boil water. When caring for infants when directed to boil water, contact their primary care provider for advice about their increased risk. You may be advised only to use bottled water with an infant or immunocompromised children. Use boiled (and cooled) or bottled water for washing dishes, drinking, preparing or cooking food, making infant formulas, making ice, and brushing teeth. You may use non-boiled or bottled water for flushing toilets, showering, and handwashing. If you are concerned about children consuming non-boiled water when showering, use cooled boiled water or bottled water.³¹

Do Not Drink Notice

When a public drinking water system distributes a Do Not Drink notices to users, do not boil water. Boiling water may cause certain contaminants to become more concentrated. You should only use bottled water or water from an alternate source that is of adequate water quality. You may use tap water for flushing toilets, showering, and handwashing. If you are concerned about children consuming water when showering or bathing, use bottled water. When caring for infants during a Do Not Drink notice requirement, contact their health care provider for advice about their increased risk. You may be advised only to use bottled water with an infant or immunocompromised children. Bottled water or water from an alternate

source should be used for washing dishes, drinking, preparing or cooking food, making infant formulas, making ice, and brushing teeth.³¹

Septic Systems

Floodwater can damage your septic and on-site wastewater system preventing wastewater from being properly treated. Floodwater can also overwhelm systems and cause wastewater to back up into your school or child care. If wastewater backs up into your school or child care do not return to the building until the water has receded. If your septic system was impacted by floodwater or if your school or child care was impacted by large amounts of wastewater requiring a septic tank pumper, contact your [Department of Environmental Conservation regional engineer](#) for support.³²

Food Safety

Dispose of any food that may have come into contact with floodwater or has not been properly refrigerated, including canned goods, water bottles, utensils, and baby bottle nipples.²³ Avoid consuming vegetables or fruit that have been directly exposed to floodwater. Wait at least 30 days before replanting fruits, vegetables, or herbs to allow the soil to dry and for any harmful bacteria or microorganisms to naturally die off. During a power outage, food can remain safe in a closed refrigerator (40 °F or below) for up to four hours, in a half-full freezer (0 °F or below) for 24 hours, and in a full freezer for 48 hours. Before an outage, fill empty freezer space with crumpled newspaper, gel packs, or containers of water to maintain cold temperatures longer, leaving room for expansion and avoiding glass bottles. Once power is restored, frozen food with visible ice crystals can remain frozen. If thawed but still cold, refrigerate and consume within 24 hours. Discard any food left in the refrigerator for over four hours or frozen food that has completely thawed and is no longer cold.²²

Hand Hygiene

The Department of Health encourages schools and child cares to consider ensuring that all staff and children receive education and training on proper hand hygiene. After helping younger children wash their hands, staff should also wash their own hands. Both children and staff should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and clean water are unavailable, use wipes or sanitizer. For children under 24 months use non-alcohol-based sanitizer and wipes. Staff should monitor young children to prevent ingestion of hand sanitizer.

³² Agency of Natural Resources. Managing Your Septic System in a Flood. <https://anr.vermont.gov/document/managing-your-septic-system-flood#:~:text=If%20you%20have%20experienced%20flood-related%20damage%20to%20your,to%20the%20homeowner%2C%20licensed%20designer%20and%20excavating%20contractor.>

All children and staff should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Before and after preparing food or drinks.
- Before and after eating, handling food or feeding children.
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment.
- After using the toilet or assisting a child in the bathroom.
- After contact with bodily fluids, this includes diaper changing.
- Before and after handling facial coverings, face shields, or goggles.
- After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste.
- After playing outdoors.
- Before and after engaging in sand and sensory play.
- After handling garbage.
- Before and after cleaning.³³

Outdoor Play

Floodwater can affect play areas like playgrounds and school yards, introducing bacterial and microbial contaminants that can make people sick.¹ Reducing these contaminants in soil may take months. Consider replacing soil, mulch, sand in sandboxes, and wood chips in play areas. Other options include covering contaminated soil with new soil and planting grass, heavily watering soil to flush out contaminants, and improving drainage to reduce standing water.³⁴ It is crucial to teach children not to play in standing water, areas with visible debris, or spaces affected by floodwater.

Schools and child care facilities should also be aware of mosquito risks associated with standing water left by floods. Mosquitoes breed in water that remains for more than four days. To reduce mosquitoes, remove or empty items that collect water, such as cans, pots, tires, clogged gutters, wading pools, and birdbaths. Aerate ponds, stock them with fish, and maintain swimming pools properly. Use landscaping to prevent water pooling and keep grass short and bushes trimmed.

Use [EPA-registered](#) insect repellents for safety and effectiveness. Schools and child care facilities should consider policies for repellent use, such as requiring caregiver permission or allowing older children to apply it themselves. DEET is a safe and effective repellent; use it sparingly on children under 2 years old and choose products with no more than 30% DEET

³³ Vermont Department for Children and Families. Child Care Licensing Regulations Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs. https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Licensing/CC-CenterBased-Regs.pdf?_gl=1*1rbu4rs*_ga*MjUwMzc4NzY3LjE3MDU0MzIzOTc.*_ga_V9WQH77KLW*czE3NjkxODM0MDMkbzlyMSRnMSR0MTc2OTE4NDA5NiRqNTgkbDAkaDA.

³⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reopening Outdoor Public Spaces After Flooding. <https://www.cdc.gov/environmental-health-response-and-recovery/php/about/reopen-outdoor-spaces.html>

for children. Be cautious when applying repellent to children's hands and faces to avoid contact with their eyes or mouths.

Additional Considerations

Schools and child care facilities should maintain clear, consistent, and regular communication with staff, children, caregivers, and community members, especially regarding changes to policies and operations.

Consider including the following in communications:

- Information on trauma-informed practices and helping children cope with stress and tragedies (see section on social emotional health).
- Availability of community resources, including:
 - Mental health support.
 - Food security assistance.
 - Medical and dental services.
 - Health insurance information.
 - Economic aid.
 - Housing assistance.
- Consider communication strategies to keep staff, parents, caregivers, and students informed of your response during and after an emergency.
- Consider developing communication strategies to keep staff, parents, caregivers, and students informed during and after emergencies.
- Utilize all available channels, including direct communication (face-to-face, letters), electronic communication (your facility's website or social media), and remote parent meetings for updates.
- Ensure all communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Provide translation or interpretation services for caregivers requiring language support.

Health and Safety Resources for Schools and Child Cares

Vermont Resources

- [Find Your Local Health Office | Vermont Department of Health](#)
 - Local Health supports every Vermont community through a network of 12 Local Health offices statewide. Local Health staff are trained and ready to respond to public health emergencies so people in our community can stay healthy and safe.
- [OnCall for Vermont EMS and MRC Locator](#)
 - Regional Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer activities support plans for distributing medicines and supplies in emergencies, provide resources for responder health and safety, and strengthen community information, alert, and warning systems.
- [Stay Safe in a Flood | Vermont Department of Health](#)
 - Safety information, videos, and downloadable handouts available in multiple languages (Arabic, Burmese, Chinese - Mandarin, Dari, English, French, Haitian Creole, Kirundi, Maay Maay, Nepali, Pashto, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and American Sign Language).
- [Information on Flooding | YouTube Vermont Language Justice Project](#)
 - Vermont Language Justice Project YouTube playlist with multilingual video information on how to stay safe during a flood and heavy rainfall. Languages include English, Arabic, Burmese, Dari, French, Kirundi, Maay Maay, Mandarin, Nepali, Pashto, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Ukrainian, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, and American Sign Language.
- [How to Test Your Drinking Water | Vermont Department of Health](#)
 - Guidance on how to test your private drinking water.
- [Flood Drinking Water Test Kit | Vermont Department of Health Webstore](#)
 - Order a flood drinking water test kit for wells and springs through the Vermont Department of Health Webstore.
- [WIC | Vermont Department of Health](#)
 - WIC is the USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC can assist with questions regarding infant feeding including breastfeeding and formula feeding. Eligible families can enroll in WIC for support with accessing healthy foods.
- [CARE \(Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies\) | Vermont Enhanced 911 Board](#)
 - Emergencies can take many forms. If prolonged, these events may become life threatening for people with certain disabilities or other circumstances. The CARE program was created to help emergency responders identify Vermonters

who might need additional assistance in case of a wide-scale event. If you, or someone you know, might need additional assistance in such an emergency, please complete the online registration below.

- [Public Drinking Water Program | Department of Environmental Conservation](#)
 - If you operate a Public Water System and your system has been impacted by flooding, [report your drinking water emergency online](#) or call the Public Drinking Water Program during business hours at 802-828-1535.
- [Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Program | Department of Environmental Conservation](#)
 - Contact information for Department of Environmental Conversation regional engineer. Contact your regional engineer for support if your septic system was impacted by floodwater or if your school or child care is impacted by large amounts of wastewater requiring a septic tank pumper.
- [Vermont 211](#)
 - Vermont 211 is a free, confidential information and referral program of the United Ways of Vermont, helping to connect Vermonters with a wide range of community, health, and human resources and services.
- [Vermont 211 | Disaster Damage Business Form](#)
 - This form is for reporting damage to your business. The information will be used to help determine if the state will qualify for federal assistance as well as assist response coordination.
- [New England Vermont Traffic | New England 511 | 511 Traffic | Commuter Information](#)
 - Use this tool to monitor road closures and potential hazards.
- [Welcome to Flood Ready Vermont | Flood Ready](#)
 - Flood Ready Vermont is an online resource with tools that aim to help individuals and communities become more flood resilient by providing information, tools, and data needed to be prepared.
- [Vermont Flood Ready Atlas | Flood Ready](#)
 - Online-map tool that can help you identify critical facilities, transportation services and buildings in your community that are at risk of damage from flooding. The Atlas can also help you identify local watersheds and the extent of natural flood protection provided by forests, wetlands, floodplains and river corridors.
- [Weather Alerts | Department of Public Safety](#)
 - Sign up for email weather alerts from the Department of Public Safety.
- [Home Page | Vermont Emergency Management](#)
 - Vermont Emergency Management has resources on flood assistance, flood recovery, emergency preparedness, and hazard mitigation.
- [Local Hazard Mitigation Plan | Vermont Emergency Management](#)

- A Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is a future community resilience and climate adaptation plan. All hazards that may cause damages or threaten life and property are assessed in the LHMP so that the community can develop projects and initiatives to address vulnerabilities.
- [Vermont Alert | Vermont Emergency Management](#)
 - Sign up for notifications by text, phone, or email to be notified of emergency situations. Vermont Alert “VT-ALERT” a free messaging program that is used by state and local responders to notify Vermonters of emergency situations including evacuation information, severe weather advisories, boil water advisories, and roadway interruptions. Notifications can be tailored to alert for specific locations and types of alerts.
- [Emergency Management Director Public Contact Information | Vermont Emergency Management](#)
 - Directory of Emergency Management Director (EMD) contact information by town.
- [Vermont Water Conditions | U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#)
 - USGS water conditions for Vermont. Data available by 53 monitoring locations across Vermont and state-level.
- [Lake Champlain Water Data | U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#)
 - U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) monitoring water data for Lake Champlain.
- [The Green Mountain Emergency Preparedness Guide | Disabilities Aging and Independent Living](#)
 - This emergency preparedness tool was made to support individuals with special health and educational needs. Use this tool to support children and share with their families.
- [Long Term Recovery Groups | Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters](#)
 - List of long-term recovery groups in local communities across Vermont.
- [Bethel Strong](#)
 - Bethel Strong is a community resource for the Bethel community and emergency information.
- [Resilience Hub Toolkit | Built by Vermont Flood Survivors](#)
 - This toolkit was compiled by Vermont community members, organizers, and caretakers in the aftermath of flooding in 2023 and 2024 for communities, mutual aid groups, local organizations, and municipalities to use in assessing and building resilience to disaster and disruption.

National Resources

- [National Weather Service](#)
 - Input your city, state, or zip code for current information on weather hazards.
- [Experimental Graphical Hazardous Weather Outlook | National Weather Service](#)
 - 24-hour hazardous weather outlook for Vermont.
- [Northeast River Forecast Center | National Weather Service](#)
 - Information on river gauge, hazards, and precipitation estimates.
- [National Hurricane Center and Central Pacific Hurricane Center | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#)
 - Information on tropical weather outlooks, active storms, and marine forecasts.
- [Safety Guidelines: Floodwater | Floods | CDC](#)
 - Important information on the dangers of flooding and what to look out for to stay safe.
- [Floods and Your Safety | Floods | CDC](#)
 - Information on flood preparedness, staying safe after a flood, and re-entering your home following a flood event.
- [Coping with Disasters | NAEYC](#)
 - List of online resources on how to support children during and after a disaster.
- [Disasters and Children | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics resources to support children during and after a disaster. Materials include specific resources for communities and families.
- [Flash Floods and Flood Recovery: Disaster Management Resources](#)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics information on how to keep children and their families safe during flash floods, flood recovery, and clean up efforts.
- [Here for Each Other Helping Families After Emergencies](#)
 - A family guide for helping children following an emergency. This publication is from Sesame Street and Public Service Enterprise Group in partnership with the American Red Cross, Emergency Medical Services for Children National Resource Center, Child Mind Institute's Stress and Resilience Program, and NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene.
- [How to Help Children Cope with Trauma | Child Mind Institute](#)
 - Information on how educators can support children, signs of trauma in children and adolescents, and age specific information on how to support children by ages 0-2, 2-5, 6-11, and 12-18.
- [Living Schoolyards and Climate Resilience - National Outdoor Learning Initiative | Green Schoolyards America](#)
 - Information on how green infrastructure and ecological design in school yards can support climate resilience and children's health.

School-Specific Resources

- [Guidance on Playgrounds and Outdoor Recreation Space | Agency of Education](#)
 - Information from the Agency of Education on playground safety after a flood.
- [Act 29: Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\) | Agency of Education](#)
 - Emergency Operations Plan resources available through the Agency of Education.
- [Education for Homeless Children and Youth | Agency of Education](#)
 - Vermont's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program ensures that students experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education provided to other Vermont children, with the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards. The EHCY program is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, and seeks to identify and address the challenges that children and youth experiencing homelessness may face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school.

Child Care-Specific Resources

- [Playground Safety After a Flood | Department for Children and Families](#)
 - Collaborative guidance from the Child Development Division and Vermont Department of Health on playground safety after a flood.
- [Health & Safety Resources | Department for Children and Families](#)
 - List of online resources, including emergency response, emergency management resources, extreme weather, and more.