

Get Flood Smart

Warmer weather this spring brought a significant amount of excess water to Crystal in the form of snowmelt and runoff, and there is always the chance that heavy spring or summer rains will cause further stormwater issues. As a result, it's important that residents be prepared to protect their homes from costly disaster damage. Anywhere it can rain, it can flood.

Even though flood insurance isn't federally required, anyone can be financially vulnerable to floods. Policyholders outside of high-risk flood areas file more than 20% of all FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) claims and receive one-third of federal disaster assistance for flooding.

A Preferred Risk Policy provides both building and contents coverage for properties in moderate- to low-risk areas for one low price. In addition, renters can get contents-only policies for as little as \$20/year.

A good first step is to talk to your insurance agent to verify your home or business is covered for disasters such as floods. If not, ask for a quote. Most people don't realize flood damage and sanitary sewer backups are not typically covered by a homeowner's or commercial insurance policy.

FEMA's NFIP offers flood insurance to properties in the City of Crystal and other communities that adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations.

For more information on flood insurance coverage, visit www.floodsmart.gov/learn.

Flood Insurance: Frequently Asked Questions

1) If I get water in my basement from a snow melt or seepage from heavy rains, does the NFIP cover this type of issue?

- First, we need to define what a flood is. FEMA's NFIP flood insurance policies cover overflow of inland waters and unusual and rapid accumulation or runoff of surface waters from any source. However, the flood must be a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of two or more continuous acres of normally dry land area or of two or more adjacent properties (at least one of which is yours). When you make a claim, a trained adjuster will come out and make that determination.
- If your home has suffered a flood and you have an NFIP policy, it will cover your home's foundation elements and equipment that's necessary to support the structure (furnace, water heaters, circuit breakers, etc.). These items are often the most costly to repair or replace. It's important to note that some items in your basement are covered under building coverage (like a furnace, hot water heater and circuit breaker) and others are covered under contents coverage that must be purchased in addition to building coverage (a washer and dryer, a freezer and the food in it). The NFIP encourages people to purchase both building and contents coverage. Flood insurance does not cover basement improvements, such as finished walls, floors, ceilings or personal belongings that may be kept in a basement. For a complete list of what's covered, view the [Standard Flood Insurance Policy \(SFIP\) Forms](#).

2) Can I get a flood insurance policy today to protect me against a possible flood tomorrow?

- It typically takes 30 days from the day you purchase flood insurance for the policy to go into effect, that's why it is so important to act now to ensure you're properly insured against potential flooding through the spring and summer months.

3) I do not live in a 100-year floodplain or Special Flood Hazard Area. Do I need flood insurance?

- Yes! **Anywhere it can rain, it can flood.** Even though flood insurance isn't federally required, anyone can be financially vulnerable to floods. In fact, policyholders outside of mapped high-risk flood areas file over 20 percent of all NFIP flood insurance claims and receive one-

third of federal disaster assistance for flooding. When it's available, federal disaster assistance is typically a loan you must repay with interest. A Preferred Risk Policy provides both building and contents coverage for properties in moderate- to low-risk areas for one low price. In addition, renters can get contents-only policies for as little as \$20/year. Ask your insurance agent for a quote.

3) Where can I go to see if I live in a high-risk flood zone?

- FEMA publishes maps indicating a community's flood hazard areas and the degree of risk in those areas. Flood insurance maps usually are on file in a local repository in the community, such as the planning and zoning or engineering offices in the town hall or the county building. In addition, you can order maps online or by writing, phoning or faxing a request to the [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#).

4) If my sump pump breaks or is not functioning (for example due to a power outage) and I get water in my basement, will that be covered?

- It depends – flood insurance may cover sewer backup (SBU) damage if the flood is the direct, physical cause of the backup. If not, SBU damage can typically be insured through an additional rider on your homeowners or commercial policies. It's important to talk to your insurance agent about your options and additional coverages you may need to consider. In addition, consider investing in a battery-operated sump pump so it will continue to function in case the power goes out.

5) How are the rates set for flood insurance?

- The amount you pay for your policy is calculated based on a number of factors unique to your situation, but it's important to understand NFIP flood insurance rates do not differ from company to company or agent to agent. All policy premiums include certain fees and surcharges, so ask your agent about these when discussing a price quote. Factors considered when determining your rate include:
 - Year your home or business was constructed
 - Building occupancy
 - Number of floors
 - Location of contents in your building
 - Flood risk (e.g., your flood zone)
 - Location of the lowest floor in relation to the Base Flood Elevation on the flood map
 - Deductible and amount of building and contents coverage

6) Is the flood insurance premium paid for through the escrow on my mortgage?

- If flood insurance is required by your lender, as a condition for your loan, your premium may be paid through an escrow account established by your mortgage lender, at your lender's discretion. However, if you have an escrow account that collects and pays for other types of insurance or taxes, the lender is required to also escrow flood insurance premium payments. Contact your lender for more information. If flood insurance is not being required by your lender, you can pay your insurance premium using whatever methods of payment the insurer accepts. Generally, this can be a credit card (Discover Card, Visa, MasterCard or American Express), check, or money order. You may also be able to make your payment through your insurance agent using the same methods, including cash.