

## City Council

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# City of Long Beach Official Community Update

Summer 2013

"The City by the Sea"

[www.longbeachny.org](http://www.longbeachny.org)

## FLOOD AWARENESS BULLETIN

Dear Neighbors,

A few years ago, the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) issued new preliminary floodplain maps to the City of Long Beach that reflect the current flood risks to homeowners. These Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) represent flood zone boundaries of a community, and, because we are a barrier island, virtually all of Long Beach is considered a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).



Scott J. Mandel

FEMA set up the Community Rating System (CRS), a point system that helps to reduce flood insurance premiums and rewards communities that undertake floodplain activities beyond the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As a participant in the NFIP, the City of Long Beach began an outreach program in an attempt to have the flood insurance rates reduced City-wide, and we did just that. Residents now receive a 10% discount on their flood insurance.

This newsletter provides information that can protect your home and your family in the event of a flood. We kindly ask that you read through the material. It provides tips on emergency planning, flood proofing, and other safety measures you can take now so that you are prepared in advance of a flood event.

Sincerely,

Scott J. Mandel  
President, Long Beach City Council

### DRAINAGE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The drainage system is maintained by the City of Long Beach Sewer Maintenance Department. If your property is located near a storm drain, make sure that it is not clogged with leaves and other debris as streets cannot drain properly when drains are clogged. It is important that you report any kind of dumping or other conditions which are interfering with the proper functioning of this system. Report all incidents to the LBP, Department of Public Works and the Building Department. Violators will be subject to fines.



Tide levels can fluctuate during severe storms

### SPECIAL TIPS FOR THOSE LIVING IN THE SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA

1. Sign up for the City of Long Beach Swift 911™ Emergency Notification System. Swift 911™ transmits a message to every home and business within a targeted area to warn of an impending storm, flood, evacuation, or other emergency situation. Call 431-1000 x 7105 and leave your name, street address, and telephone number. A staff person will return your call to confirm your information.
2. If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Your regular homeowner's insurance policy doesn't cover damage from floods. However, because the City of Long Beach participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the Federal Government and is available to everyone. If you have a mortgage, you must have this insurance. For map information contact the Building Department at 431-1005.
3. Flood protection assistance is available from the Building Department. They can help you with permit requirements, map determinations, lowest level requirements, site visits, and plan reviews in order for you to decrease the potential flood damage to your property. Additionally, flyers on retrofitting and how to reduce wind and flood damage are available at the Building Department.
4. The Long Beach Public Library has FEMA publications at the reference desk.

## STORM TIPS

1. Sign up for the City of Long Beach Swift 911™ Emergency Notification System. See the front of this newsletter for info.
2. Establish a personal emergency plan. Make sure all members of your household are familiar with it, including your children. With the exception of guide dogs and other certified companion animals, Red Cross shelters will not allow pets. Call the American Red Cross at (516) 747-3500 or visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to learn about the PetSafe Program. Monitor flooding patterns in your neighborhood in order to plan the best evacuation route.
3. Be ready to evacuate at least 18 hours before the storm is expected to hit. Pre-storm tides and flooding can cut off routes of escape.
4. Make sure your vehicle has a full tank of gas.
5. Prepare an emergency supply kit; this should include an adequate supply of water since local water systems may be damaged. Have a supply of non-perishable foods such as canned meat or fish, crackers, cheese, peanut butter, special diet foods, juice, a manual can opener, battery operated radio, flashlights, and a fresh supply of batteries.
6. Prepare a first aid kit which includes a 1-2 week supply of your prescription medication.
7. Prepare your property. If you have to evacuate, cut off all electrical circuits at the main. Shut off the water service and gas valves at each appliance. If possible, move appliances and furniture to a higher level. Secure outdoor furniture and structures so that they don't become deadly missiles in hurricane winds. Secure boats and floats with additional lines. Lock the doors to your home or business.
8. Evaluate what important papers you should take with you such as medical records, ID, etc. If you have been evacuated, you may need ID in order to return to your property.
9. Businesses must also establish a plan and fully train their employees. Those with special conditions or hazards must be fully advised of potential problems so that we can safeguard lives, protect businesses, and protect the community at large. Evaluate your plan yearly and update accordingly.
10. After the storm has past, many dangers may be left behind. The most important thing is to be alert and follow any instructions that are given to you by emergency personnel.
11. Since drowning is the number one cause of deaths during a flood, you should be very careful walking through flooded areas. Six inches of flowing water can knock you off your feet. If you are in standing water, use a stick to help you keep your footing. Also, keep an axe in your attic in the event rising waters force you to need escape onto your roof. Additionally, the danger of electrocution by downed wires is always present.
12. Do not drive through flooded areas. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around barriers; they are there for a reason. It might look safe but it wouldn't be there unless some hazard is present.
13. Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The number two flood killer after drownings is electrocution. Electrical currents can travel through water. Report any downed wires to the power authority.
14. Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floor are covered with debris including broken glass, nails, etc. Use caution. Muddy floors and stairs can be slippery.
15. Be alert for gas leaks. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flame, especially in areas which have not been well ventilated.
16. If your building or home has been declared unsafe or if you have been advised not to enter it for any reason you must comply.
17. Most people who live in flood prone areas are aware of the threat of flooding since it often occurs during some moon tides. If you live in the flood zone but have never experienced flooding, don't feel that these warnings are not for you. Computer predictions have shown that the storm surge during a major storm could bring the floodwater above Sunrise Highway. We can save lives and properties by being prepared. Even if your property doesn't flood you still might have to evacuate if public services such as water, electric, gas etc. cannot be provided. 

## PROPERTY PROTECTION METHODS

1. Most houses can be raised so that the lowest floor is above the flood protection level. The building department can show you examples of homes (large and small) which have been raised.
2. Install floodwalls which are properly designed to resist water pressure and are of sufficient height. This application works best where floodwaters do not exceed 3 feet.
3. Dry floodproofing means sealing a building to keep floodwaters out. Walls are coated, openings (e.g., windows, doors) are closed permanently or they are temporarily sealed with a removable shield or sandbags.
4. Wet floodproofing means modifying a building so that the floodwaters will cause only minimum damage to the building and contents. Building materials below base flood level are removed and are replaced to allow floodwaters into the building to counter the pressure on the outside walls.
5. Make sure that the professional you hire to do your retrofitting project has demonstrated an expertise in this type of work. Building permits must be obtained prior to all work. Be further advised the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards (e.g., 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). 

City of Long Beach  
1 West Chester St.  
Long Beach, NY 11561

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