

Floods



No one will forget that in a hurry: weeks of heavy rain transformed large portions of southern, eastern and northern Germany into disaster areas through the summer floods of 2013. In such cases, little brooks can become raging torrents which present a danger to your home, property and life.

The old town of Passau was completely flooded in the unprecedented floods in June 2013





Well-prepared for floods

The water is rising and there is no end in sight.
There is still time to prepare.

- › Obtain sandbags, lining boards, water-resistant plywood boards and silicone for protection.
- › Make sure that hazardous materials or chemicals cannot be reached by the water.
- › Bring valuable furniture or devices such as computers etc. into the higher, flood-protected rooms.
- › Secure the fuel oil tank against being lifted up by the water by, for example, anchoring it to the wall or weighing it down with ballast.
- › Obtain sufficient food and drinking water, a battery-powered radio or a wind-up radio, a torch, a camping stove and a camping toilet. Have your briefcase containing the most important documents ready. You will find more information in the sections “Emergency pack” and “Document security.”
- › Remember insect repellent, in case mosquitoes and other pests come into the house after the flood waters fall.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

OUR TIP:



Find out the critical high-water mark for your residential area from your local authority. You can find information on the latest flood levels on the Internet at www.hochwasserzentralen.de.



VERY IMPORTANT!

Keep up-to-date! Follow the latest weather reports and flood warnings on the radio, Internet or by teletext.

Consider the following at an early stage:

- › The care of sick people or people in need of assistance. Can you evacuate these people from the danger zone on time? Where to?
- › The evacuation of pets.
- › The possibilities for communicating with neighbours or other people if the telephone and mobile network are down. Discuss distress and danger signals with neighbours.
- › The “distribution of roles” in an emergency. Who will do what?



© blickwinkel/imago



© imagebroker/imago

Protective walls of sandbags



© Xinhua/imago

Rescue workers during the flood in Halle, Saxony-Anhalt, 2013

Correct action in the event of a flood

Remain calm. Check whether your precautions are sufficient.

INDOORS

- › Clear out the cellars into which the groundwater may penetrate or which may fill up with water.
- › Check backwater flap valves in the cellar before the water rises. Do not stay in the cellar during the flood, since you will be putting your life at risk.
- › Seal windows and doors, as well as drain openings.
- › Turn off electrical appliances and radiators in rooms which may fill up with water. Think of the risk of an electric shock. Turn off the electric power completely, if necessary (fuse off).

IN THE CAR

- › Drive your car out of endangered garages or away from parking spaces.
- › Warning! Basement garages can become death traps when there is danger of flooding.
- › Do not drive through flooded streets. Water in the engine compartment does a lot of damage. The catalytic convertor with an operating temperature of 700°C breaks when it is suddenly cooled down by water.
- › Have your vehicle towed if there is water up to above the wheels.

Flooding in the town



© BBK

SAVE LIVES

- › Help others, but don't put yourself in danger.
 - › Bring children out of the floodplain into safety before entering the danger zone.
 - › Because of the formation of waves and the risk of underwater obstacles, do not go for a "ride" unnecessarily in boats or other vehicles in flooding areas.
 - › Do not enter any shore areas because of the risk of undercutting or erosion.
- Flooded or partially flooded streets may not be driven on.
- › Observe the instructions and barriers of the emergency personnel.



Flooding in
Königswinter am Rhein

© BBK

Behaviour after the flood

The water is draining away. Now it is time to take stock and tidy up.

- › Only start the pumping operations in the house when you are sure that the groundwater level has fallen sufficiently. Be careful: otherwise, you will damage the house's watertight tanking. Please pay attention to information provided by the municipality.



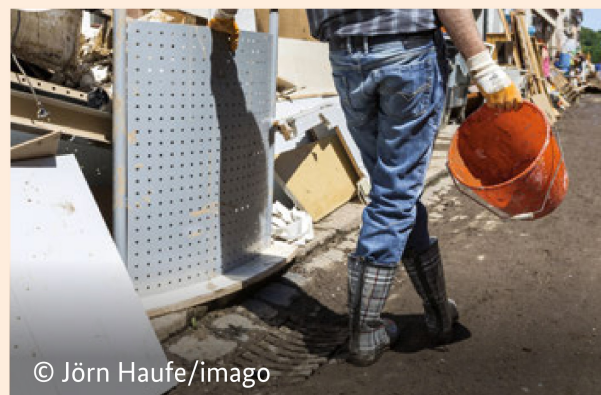
- › Take stock and photograph the damages for the insurance company.
- › Clear the residual water and silt out of the house.
- › Dry the rooms as quickly as possible, in order to avoid structural damages or mould. Use heaters for drying. They can be rented or loaned.
- › Have the electricians, the fuel oil tank and, in special cases, the building statics checked by an expert.
- › If hazardous substances, such as dyes, paint, pesticides, petrol, oil etc. have been released, call the fire brigade.
- › Dirty, broken furniture and spoiled food does not go in the household waste, but must be disposed of professionally.
- › Do not eat any fruit, vegetables and salad from flooded areas. Inform the County Commissioner's Office or the Office for Agriculture in the event of gardens or fields contaminated by hazardous substances (e.g. oil).



ALWAYS UP-TO-DATE

You can find more information at www.bbk.bund.de and www.hochwasserzentralen.de.

Clearing work after the flood in the old town of Grimma, Saxony, 2013



© Jörn Haufe/imag