



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

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City of Lawton Flood Protection Information

Flooding in our city is caused by three sources: East Cache Creek, Numu Creek and Wolf Creek leave their banks during heavy storms. Floodwaters can cover many blocks. The Meadowbrook Creek and Wrattan Creek are smaller streams which flood during or soon after heavy storms. Floodwaters are not as deep, but they still cover streets and yards and can flood cars, garages, basements and lower floors.

Flooding in all these areas can come with little warning. Floods are also dangerous. Even though they appear to move slowly (three feet per second), a flood two feet deep can knock a man off his feet and float a car.

Your property may be high enough that it was not flooded recently. However, it can still be flooded in the future because the next flood could be worse. If you are in the floodplain, the odds are that someday your property will be damaged. This flyer gives you some ideas of what you can do to protect yourself.

City Flood Services: The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Lawton Public Library. You can also visit the Stormwater Management Division on the first floor of City Hall to see if you are in a mapped floodplain. If so, they can give you more information, such as depth of flooding over a building's first floor, past flood problems in the area, and copies of elevation certificates on buildings built in the floodplain. Even if you are not in the floodplain, there still may be some risk of flooding.

What You Can Do: Several of the City's efforts depend on your cooperation and assistance. Here is how you can help:

- Do not dump or throw anything into the ditches or streams. Dumping in our ditches and streams is a violation of Lawton City Code Section 19A-1-3-133. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug channels. A plugged channel cannot carry water and when it rains the water has to go somewhere. Every piece of trash contributes to flooding.
- If your property is next to a ditch or stream, please do your part and keep the banks clear of brush and debris. The City has a stream maintenance program which can help remove major blockages such as downed trees.
- If you see dumping or debris in the ditches or streams, contact the Stormwater Management Hotline at 581-3565.
- Always check with the License and Permit Center before you build on, alter, regrade or fill your property. A permit may be needed to ensure that projects do not cause problems on other properties.
- If you see building or filling without a City permit posted, contact License & Permits at 581-3360.
- Check out the following information on floodproofing, flood insurance and flood safety.

Floodproofing: There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage. One way is to keep the water away by regarding your lot or building a small floodwall or earthen berm. These methods work if your lot is large enough, if flooding is not too deep, and if your property is not in the floodway. License & Permits can provide this information.

Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method is not recommended for houses with basements or if water will get over two feet deep.

A third approach is to raise the house above flood levels. A small wood frame house can be elevated for less than \$10,000.

Many houses, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that back up into the basement during heavy rains. Talk to a plumber about installing a backflow prevention valve.

These measures are called floodproofing or retrofitting. More information is available at the Lawton Public Library. *Important note:* Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from License & Permits. Even regrading or filling in the floodplain requires a permit.

If you know a flood is coming, you should shut off the gas and electricity and move valuable contents upstairs. It is unlikely that you will get much warning, so a detailed checklist prepared in advance would help ensure that you don't forget anything.

Flood Insurance: If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because Lawton 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, even for properties that have been flooded.

Some people have purchased flood insurance because it was required by the bank or mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. During the kind of flooding that can happen in Lawton, there is usually more damage to the furniture and contents than there is to the structure.

Don't wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection. There is a 30-day waiting period before National Flood Insurance Program coverage takes effect. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

At last count, there were 812 flood insurance policies in Lawton. If you are covered, double-check that the building coverage is adequate and make sure you have contents coverage. Remember: Even if the last flood missed you or you have done some floodproofing, the next flood could be worse. Flood insurance covers all surface floods.

Flood Safety

Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there.

Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The number two flood killer after drowning is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to AEP/PSO or the City/County emergency management office.

Have your electricity turned off by AEP/PSO. Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

Look out for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.

Look before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.