



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

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RCDHU Shares Tips to Prepare for the Spring Thaw

With the arrival of Spring, comes the risk of flooding on some roadways and properties. Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) would like to remind residents and property owners of a few tips that can reduce the risk of flooding.

Be prepared before a flooding event.

- Monitor weather and take warnings seriously.
- Ensure drainage ditches, etc. around your home are clear and can function during periods of heavy rain.
- Label the shut off valves and the direction to turn off the gas, water, power, etc. If you must leave your home due to rising flood waters, turn off the power, gas, etc.
- Maintain your home to keep flood water out.
- Move items likely to be affected by a flood to higher areas where possible.
- Ensure chemicals, cleaners; gas cans, etc. are stored in such a manner as not to contaminate flood water.
- Have extra supplies of water and food available that you can prepare without electricity.
- Have your vehicle filled up and ready to go.
- Ensure you have a supply of fuel for generators and pumps. Store fuel in a manner so as not to contaminate flood water.
- Have an [emergency kit](#) stocked and ready to go. Be sure to include important documents, cash, medications, and food and drinking water supply for 72 hours.

Advice for those with private wells and septic systems:

- Flood water and water ponding around wells and septic systems can affect the safety of your drinking water and proper operation of your septic system.
- RCDHU is advising to boil well water for one minute at a rolling boil before drinking if your well is directly affected by flooding.
- Have your well water tested for E. coli and Total Coliform bacteria. RCDHU offers this test free of charge.
- If your septic system has been affected, limit water usage by taking quick and less frequent showers rather than baths, avoid using the dishwasher, and washing machine and flush toilets only when necessary.

- Ensure your basement sump pump water is directed away from the septic system.
- Do not pump out your septic tank when the soil around the tank or the leaching bed is still saturated with water. High ground water levels may cause an empty septic tank to float and break out of the ground and damage the tank and connecting plumbing.

The following tips will help protect your family during flooding events:

- Keep your family safe by keeping family members and pets away from and out of fast-moving water and flood water.
- DO NOT enter areas where electrical systems have been affected by flood water as you may be electrocuted. Always wait for clearance from the electrical authority before entering these areas.
- Building materials, clothing and furniture exposed to flood waters are likely contaminated with sewage and can support the growth of mould. Some items can be cleaned and disinfected; others may need to be thrown out.
- Ask for professional advice during clean up. If you try to save and clean items on your own, wear protective clothing, an N95 mask, and gloves.

For more information, visit RCDHU's website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/healthy-living/emergency-preparedness/> or call 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097.

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