

# Village of Glen Ellyn – Flood Protection Information



## *Flood Hazards and Possible Improvements*

Properties in the Village are generally subject to flooding due to poor local drainage, sump pump failure, or sanitary sewer backup. You could be faced with one, two, or all three of these hazards, in addition to flooding from creeks and rivers within floodplain areas.

**Local Depressions:** Because of the topography of Glen Ellyn, many homeowners are impacted by low depressions in their yards with no way for water to drain away. In most instances, ponding water dissipates within 24 to 72 hours following the rain storm. During periods of steady rain with saturated or frozen ground, the water may stand for a longer period of time. The filling of these depressions with any material is not allowed, because the filling on one property may increase the flooding on neighboring properties.

Most lawn grasses have short root systems that cannot tolerate wet soil. Native grasses and plants have deeper root systems that can help move the water into the soil. Rain gardens are an excellent way to incorporate areas of moderate flooding into your landscaping. By using native, water-loving plants and trees you can use the water to your advantage. The internet is an excellent source of information on what plants are to be in sunny or shady rain gardens.

You may choose to install a small drain pipe to help drain the depression slowly. To reduce the length of time water ponds on your property, you may be able to install gravel and perforated drain pipes, small yard inlets, and a pipe connection to a storm sewer. Please note that this type of drainage work requires working with the Village and obtaining the appropriate permits. These types of solutions often require neighboring homeowners to work together.

**Proximity to Creeks, Rivers, and Other Floodplain Areas:** If your home is in a designated floodplain, you can look at ways to floodproof your home. You can take simple steps like building berms or floodwalls around low entry points, such as window wells or doorways, or increasing the size of drainage swales around your home. You may never be able to eliminate the potential for flooding, but you may reduce the frequency of flooding and the impacts to your property.

**Downspout and Sump Pump Discharges:** Sump pump discharges and downspouts should discharge at a point that maximizes drainage over a grassed or vegetated area on the property, and these discharge pipes should be directed to flow over at least 20 feet across your property before draining onto adjoining properties or the public right-of-way. The sump pump discharge should be extended at least 5 feet from the foundation, to prevent the recycling of water back into the footing drain tile around the basement. If there is poor drainage away from the foundation, the gutter downspouts may also be extended away from the foundation to reduce flow into the footing drain tile.

In some cases a sump pump is active or runs frequently when it is not raining. This can cause water to continuously drain across a property line into other private property or into the public right-of-way. In these cases additional steps may be required, such as:

- Building a dry (rock filled) well to accept sump pump flows;
- Building a curtain drain system, similar to a septic field arrangement. This system involves a series of shallow perforated drain pipes or rock-filled trenches that spread the water out below the surface and promote infiltration into the soil away from the foundation;
- Building a rain garden, which is a garden that consists of plants that thrive in wet conditions;
- Making a direct connection to the Village's storm sewer, if available. Contact the Village Public Works Department to determine if you are eligible for partial funding from the active sump pump discharge elimination program.

## ***Flood Hazards and Possible Improvements (continued)***

**Side and Rear Yard Grading:** In some cases the maturity of trees and shrubs and additions to the landscaping, such as fences, gardens, compost piles, and paths, have changed the way stormwater passes through your property. Even the addition of mulch every year can add inches to your property over time. You may need to rethink your landscaping to protect your home from flooding. Removal of hedge rows along side and rear yards can help to open up a path for stormwater runoff. It is best to keep side and rear yards and any other known flow path clear of obstructions.

## ***Floodplain Information Services***

The Village can help you determine if a property is in or near the floodplain. The Flood Insurance Rate Maps are available at the Building Department at 535 Duane Street. Additionally the maps are also available online at FEMA's Map Service Center or at the Glen Ellyn Public Library.

## ***Floodplain and Stormwater Management Regulations***

Maintaining the capacity of the local drainage system requires your cooperation and assistance. By keeping the drainage system clear and getting the proper permits before you build, we can prevent flooding and other drainage problems.

- Keep the storm sewer inlets clear. Especially in the spring and fall when leaves and pollen from the trees can quickly cover storm drain inlets, flooding streets and possible homes.
- Always check with the Building Department before you build on, fill, alter, or regrade your property. A permit is needed to ensure that such projects do not cause problems on other properties.

New buildings in the floodplain must be protected from flood damage. Our Village code prohibits new buildings in the floodplain. The code also requires that all substantial improvements to a building be elevated above the floodplain. A substantial improvement is when the value of an addition, alteration, repair or reconstruction project exceeds 50% of the value of the existing building. In the case of an addition, only the addition must be protected. In the case of an improvement to the original building, the entire building must be protected.

For example, if a house in the floodplain is flooded, has a fire, is hit by a tornado, or is otherwise damaged so that the cost of repairs is more than 50% of the value of the building before the damage, then the house must be elevated above the base flood level.

**For more information on the flood hazard, flood protection measures, or construction rules, contact the Village of Glen Ellyn at 630-547-5250.**

## ***Flood Protection Tips***

### **1. Prepare for flooding by doing the following:**

- Read about flood safety.
- Know how to shut off the electricity and gas to your house when a flood comes.
- Make a list of emergency numbers and identify a safe place to go.
- Make a household inventory, especially of basement contents.
- Put insurance policies, valuable papers, medicine, etc. in a safe place.
- Collect and put cleaning supplies, camera, waterproof boots, etc. in a handy place.
- Develop a disaster response plan. Find helpful information and download a template from the American Red Cross website: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/make-a-plan.html>
- Get a copy of *Repairing Your Flooded Home* booklet from FEMA and American Red Cross: [https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/flood/fema\\_p234\\_complete.pdf](https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Watershed/flood/fema_p234_complete.pdf)

### **2. Consider some permanent flood protection measures.**

- Mark your fuse or breaker box to show the circuits to the floodable areas. Turning off the power to the basement can reduce property damage and save lives.
- Consider elevating your house above flood levels.
- Check your building for water entry points. These can be basement windows, the basement stairwell, doors, and dryer vents. These can be protected with low walls or temporary shields.
- Install a floor drain plug, standpipe, overhead sewer, or sewer backup valve to prevent sewer backup flooding.
- Review more information in the publication, *Homeowner's Guide to Retrofitting: Six Ways to Protect Your House from Flooding*, found at [www.fema.gov/rebuild/mat/fema312.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/mat/fema312.shtm).
- Note that flood protection measures often require a building permit and some measures may not be safe for your type of building, so be sure to discuss the scope of your project with the Village's Community Development Department.
- Consider elevating your building above the flood level or buyout of your property in the floodplain. There might be grant money for buyouts available to the Village and DuPage County. If you are interested in elevation or buyout, contact the Village's Community Development Department.

### **3. Get a flood insurance policy.**

- Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because the Village 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 properties that have not been flooded. Because the Village participates in the Community Rating System, you will receive a reduction in the insurance premium.
- Some people have purchased flood insurance because it was required by the bank when they obtained a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. There is often more damage to the furniture and contents than there is to the structure. Be sure you have contents coverage.
- Don't wait for the next flood to buy insurance protection. In most cases, 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.
- Renters can buy contents coverage, even if the owner does not buy structural coverage on the building.

## *Flood Safety Tips*

### Outdoors

**Do not walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the number-one cause of flood deaths. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there before you go through an area where the water is not flowing.

**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 ahead may be washed out. A car can float in as little as two feet of water.

**Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** The number-two cause of death during floods is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to **1-800 EDISON-1 (1-800-334-7661)**.

### Indoors

**Turn off your electricity if your building is flooded.** If you don't feel safe doing this, call an electrician. Some appliances, such as television sets, can shock you even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, dried and inspected by a professional.

**Watch for animals.** Small animals like rats and snakes that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn items 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 thoroughly aired out. If you have questions on gas, call **1-888-NICOR4U**.

**Carbon monoxide exhaust kills.** Use a generator or other gasoline-powered machine outdoors. The same goes for camping stoves. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly — cook with charcoal outdoors.

**Clean everything that got wet.** Flood waters have picked up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, factories, and storage buildings. Spoiled food and flooded cosmetics and medicines are health hazards. **When in doubt, throw them out.**

**Take good care of yourself.** Wear gloves and boots. Wash your hands frequently during clean-up. Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is tough on both the body and spirit and the effects a disaster has on you and your family may last a long time. Keep your eyes open for signs of anxiety, stress, and fatigue in you and your family.