

Camden County

Flood Protection Information

Flooding in Camden County can be caused by three sources: The Saint Marys River, the Satilla River, and Coastal Flooding. Within the last five years, we have experienced flooding of the Saint Marys River affecting the Browntown area and coastal flooding from Hurricane Matthew. These floods caused damage to several properties and forced several families to evacuate. Floods are also dangerous, even though they appear to move slowly (three feet per second) flood water two feet deep can knock a man off his feet and float a car. If your property has not flooded recently, it could in the future. If you are in the floodplain, chances are someday your property will be damaged. This flyer gives you some ideas of what you can do to protect yourself.

County Flood Services:

Check your flood hazard; flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Camden County Public Library and Camden County Planning Office. You may also contact Scott Brazell, Camden County Floodplain Manager, at 912-510-4320. If you are in a mapped floodplain he can provide more information, such as base flood elevation for your area, prior flood problems in the area, and copies of elevation certificates on buildings built in the floodplain since 2007, or if there is a grant to help elevate your flood prone home. If you are not in a floodplain, there still may be some risk of flooding. If requested, the Public Works Department will visit a property to review its flood problem and explain ways to stop or prevent flood damage at no cost. You may reach the Public Works at 912-576-3028. If you are in a floodplain or have had a flood, drainage or sewer backup problem, check out these sources for assistance. “KNOW YOUR FLOOD HAZARD”

During weather events Camden County Emergency Management Agency closely monitors the weather conditions that could have flooding impacts to Camden County. They coordinate information and forecasts closely with the National Weather Service in Jacksonville, FL. To monitor the water levels of the St. Marys and Satilla rivers EMA receives data from river gages in each river. The St Marys River gage is at Traders Hill, GA has a 3 to 5 day delay in flooding effects and the Satilla gage in Atkinson, GA has a 3 to 5 day delay in flooding effects. Contact EMA to find your hurricane evacuation route out of Camden County, and request information on how to form a storm kit.

To stay informed with flooding and weather conditions in Camden County you can contact the EMA at 729-5602, check the Jacksonville NWS website at <http://www.weather.gov/jax>, tune into Kay-Bay radio station 106.3FM or the Lighthouse 89.3FM, and sign up for Code Red weather warnings on the home page of Camden County's website <http://www.camdencountyga.gov>. Be aware of conditions around you and do not wait for the “mandatory evacuation” notice, there is no such thing as a “mandatory evacuation” in Georgia. If you feel threatened by rising waters move to higher locations such as the homes of friends, family, or neighbors. There are five main evacuation routes approved by GDOT: Interstate 95/GA 405, Highway 40, Highway 17/GA 25, Highway 252, and Highway 259. To check the conditions of these routes call Camden County EMA at 729-5602.

What You Can Do: PROTECT NATURAL FLOODPLAIN FUNCTIONS

Several of the County's efforts depend 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 County Ordinance Sec. 50-73. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug culverts. A plugged channel cannot carry water and when it rains, the water has to go somewhere. Every piece of trash contributes to flooding.” PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY”
- If property is next to a ditch or stream, please keep the banks clear of brush and debris. The County has a maintenance program that can help remove major blockages such as downed trees. If you see dumping or debris in the ditches or streams, contact the Public Works Department at 576- 3028.
- Always check with the Planning & Development Department before you build on, alter, re-grade, or fill on 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 County permit sign posted, contact the Planning & Development at 729-5603.

Flood Proofing: PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM THE HAZARD

There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage.

- Keep the water away by re-grading your lot or by building a small floodwall or earthen berm. These methods will work only if your lot is large enough, if flooding is not too deep, and if your property is not in the floodway. Call the Public Works Department for more information.
 - Another approach is to raise the house above flood levels. It is a county ordinance to build your home a minimum of 3 foot above the base flood elevation. This can be done by adding fill dirt (with no rise certification) to raise the home site or build the house elevated above the ground. It is recommended to build higher than 3 foot if possible.
- BUILD RESPONSIBLY**
- Many houses, even those not in the floodplain, have sewers that back up or drain slowly during heavy rains. A plug or standpipe can stop this if the water does not get more than one or two feet deep. Plugs can be purchased at a hardware store for under \$50. For more information, contact a licensed plumber or building inspector.

These measures are called flood proofing or retrofitting. More information is available at the Camden County Public Library, Planning & Development, and www.floodsmart.gov. *Important note:* Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from Planning & Department. Even re-grading 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 or off the floor. In the event of flash flooding it is unlikely you will get much warning, so a detailed checklist prepared in advance would help ensure that you do not forget anything.

Flood Insurance:

If you do not have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods or "rising waters". However, because Camden County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, and has a class 6 rating, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy with a reduced rate. 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 when they got a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies mainly cover the building's structure and not the contents. During the kind of flooding that happens in Camden County, there is usually more damage to the furniture and contents than there is to the structure. If you are covered, double-check that the building coverage is adequate and make sure you have contents coverage. Renters are eligible for contents coverage. Flood insurance covers **all** surface floods. Construction or repair of existing homes may be required to meet current flood zone building requirements under FEMA's Substantial Improvement and Substantial Damage rules. For more information on these requirements, contact Scott Brazell, Camden County Floodplain Manager, at 912-510-4320.

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. "TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN"

Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Do not drive around road barriers or into flooded roadways, you cannot see what is under the water and the road or bridge may be washed out. "TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN"

Boil your water for 5 minutes if you feel your water system has been contaminated by floodwaters.

For information on water testing, mold, and flood clean up you can contact the Camden County Environmental Health Department at 729-6012.

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