

Town of Rye, New Hampshire

Flood Protection Information

Flooding in our Town is caused by hurricanes, seasonal storms and seasonal high tides, as well as, heavy rains, snow melt and potential drainage problem areas. The "Mothers Day Flood of 2005," Easter Storm of 2007" and the "Ice Storm of 2008" are a few examples of flooding that occurred within the past 5 years and the Town experienced floods where they did not have them before. Floodwaters covered streets such as Sagamore Road and Ocean Boulevard and although they were not deep in some parts, floods are dangerous.

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.

Rye Flood Services: The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Rye Public Library. You can also visit the Building Department within the Town Hall to see if you are in a mapped floodplain. If so, they can give you more information, such as depths 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 since 1991. They also have a hand out on selecting an architect, engineer, or contractor. Even 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 flooding or prevent flood damage. Call the Department at 964-5300. These services are free. If you are in a floodplain or have had a flood, drainage or sewer backup problem, check out these sources of assistance.

What You Can Do: Several of the Town'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 the Rye Town Ordinance # 28 **Litter Control Law adopted March 15, 1997, Article 17.** 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 Town has a storm water maintenance program which can help remove major blockages such as down trees.
- If you see dumping of debris in the ditches or streams, contact the Public Works Department at 964-5300.
- Always check with the Building Department before you build on, alter, regrade, 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 Town perm sign posted, contact the Building Dept. 964-9800.
- Check out the following information on flood-proofing, flood insurance and flood safety.

Rye Flood-proofing: 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. The Building Department 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. To see if a home in your area has been raised and approximate costs, check with the building department. For more information about floodproofing or retrofitting; check with the Rye Public Library. **Important note:** Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from the Building Department. Even regarding 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 Rye 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 when they got a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. At the last count there were 301 flood insurance policies in Rye and Rye Beach. 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 flood-proofing, the next flood could be worse. Flood insurance covers all surface floods. If you are interested in learning more about Flood Insurance visit, www.floodsmart.gov which is full of information.

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 PSNH.

Have your electricity turned off by the Power Company: 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 before you step. After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that haven't been covered with mud can be very slippery.

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 and turn things over and scare away small animals.

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.