

Flood Insurance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Doesn't my homeowner's policy cover flooding?

No, in most cases flood damage is not covered by homeowners' policies. Unfortunately, many do not find out their homeowner's policy does not cover flooding until it is too late.

Who *can* purchase NFIP flood insurance?

Homeowners, renters and business owners in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) can buy flood insurance. More than 96% of all Minnesotans live in a community enrolled in the NFIP.

Note: It is not necessary for your property to be mapped in a high-risk flood area (1% annual chance or "100-year" floodplain) to be eligible to purchase flood insurance. You can live anywhere in the community and be in any flood zone. According to FEMA, more than 40% of NFIP flood insurance claims come from outside the high-risk flood area.

Who *should* purchase NFIP flood insurance?

Being outside the mapped high-risk flood area is no guarantee of staying dry! There have been 10+ inch rainfall events in localized areas throughout Minnesota. If you live near an area of past flooding or an area experiencing more frequent or extreme rain events, consider purchasing flood insurance.

Who is *required* to purchase NFIP flood insurance?

Property owners are required to purchase flood insurance

- if all or any part of the insured structure is in the high-risk flood area, **and**
- if the property has a mortgage or loan on it from a federally regulated institution, **or**
- if the property has received some form of federal disaster assistance.

This includes most types of mortgages and home equity loans. The mandatory flood insurance requirement applies even if your community does not participate in the NFIP.

Note: Flood insurance is mandatory if the structure is in the high-risk flood area. It is not mandatory if just unimproved land is in the high-risk flood area. A lender may, however, have a policy of requiring flood insurance.

Can renters purchase NFIP flood insurance?

Yes, NFIP flood insurance is sold separately for contents coverage. In most communities, renters can purchase up to \$100,000 coverage for contents.

How do I purchase NFIP flood insurance?

NFIP flood insurance is sold through private insurance companies and agents and is backed by the federal government. Check with the agent with whom you have your home or automobile insurance. The NFIP partners with more than 60 private insurance companies to sell and service flood insurance policies. If you don't have an insurance agent or if your agent does not sell flood insurance, you can use the NFIP insurance provider locator by going to [FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program website](#) and selecting "Find an Insurance Provider" under the "Buying a Policy" section.

When does a NFIP flood insurance policy become effective?

Flood insurance can be purchased anytime, but there is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance becomes effective. There are a few exceptions that reduce or eliminate the waiting period, such as new policies associated with new or modified loans, or new policies purchased within 13 months of the effective date for Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that show the structure in the high-risk flood area for the first time.

Does NFIP flood insurance cover contents?

Yes, but contents coverage is sold separately from building coverage for NFIP flood insurance policies. Home and business owners need to ask their agent whether their policy includes building coverage, contents coverage or both.

Is disaster assistance the same as flood insurance?

No, without flood insurance, most must pay out-of-pocket or take out loans to repair and replace flood-damaged items. Federal assistance is not always available and is not enough to get you back to your pre-disaster condition.

Are wind-driven rain and groundwater seepage considered flooding?

No, NFIP flood insurance policies specifically exclude coverage for damages caused by wind, hail, and groundwater seepage, although most homeowners’ policies do include this coverage. **Note: A separate rider on your homeowner’s policy can typically be purchased to cover sump pump failure and sewer backup, and is encouraged.**

Does NFIP flood insurance offer any type of basement coverage?

Yes, NFIP flood insurance does cover basement structural elements, essential equipment and other items necessary for the building to function. These include foundations, attached staircases, central air conditioners, fuel tanks, water heaters, heat pumps, sump pumps, furnaces and unfinished walls, floors and ceilings. If contents coverage (sold separately) is purchased, NFIP policies also cover washers, dryers, freezers (and the food in them, but not refrigerators) and portable air conditioners. Items not necessary for the building to function are not covered by NFIP flood insurance. Items not covered include most floor coverings, finished walls, floors and ceilings, and personal belongings such as clothing, furniture, electronic equipment and other contents kept in a basement.

Note: When deciding the amount of coverage needed and whether to purchase the separate contents coverage, consider the depth of flooding anticipated and what is most likely to be damaged.

How do I view the FEMA mapped high-risk flood area for my area?

The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) may be viewed at [FEMA's Map Service Center website](#). It’s easiest to search by address but FEMA shows other options. FEMA also has a tutorial on [How to Find Your FIRM and Make a FIRMette](#). Another useful tool is the DNR’s [Is My House in the Floodplain](#) video.

Similar or like terms:

- High-risk Flood Area
- 1% Annual Chance Floodplain
- Base Flood Elevation (BFE)
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)

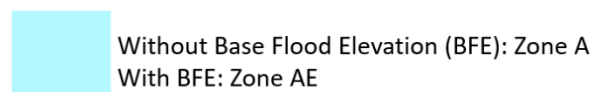
How do I find out if my community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)?

Check with your community or go to FEMA’s Community Status Book at www.fema.gov/cis/mn.pdf

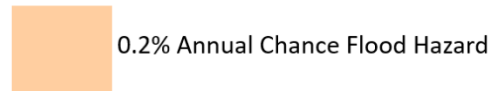
In the Community Status Book, participating communities are listed first, while the last few pages include communities that have FEMA maps but do not participate. Cities not included on either of these two lists do not have FEMA maps and do not participate.

Definitions:

High-risk Flood Area – Areas shown on FEMA maps as AE or A Zones. This is the area with a 1% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded. On newer maps (2001 on) the high-risk flood area is shaded light blue:



Medium-risk Flood Area – Areas shown on newer FEMA maps as shaded X Zone and on older FEMA maps as B Zone. This is the area within the 0.2% annual chance floodplain. On newer maps it is shaded orange:



High- and medium-risk flood areas on older (before 2001) maps shown as:

