



## FLOOD PROTECTION INFORMATION

**Your Chincoteague Property May be Located in the Flood Hazare Area as Mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.**

**Sources of Flooding:** Flooding in our Town occurs during Nor'easters, Tropical Storms and Hurricanes. The most commonly experienced flooding occurs when Nor'easters approach the region and push tidal waters into the inlet. When this occurs, winds prevent the tidal waters from receding and create a pile up in the channels and bays until the next high tide. This can result in tides that exceed 5 feet or more above normal tides.

**The Extent of Past Flooding Events:** The Town of Chincoteague has experienced several major storms within the last century. The 1933 hurricane passed over the area bringing 80 mile per hour Hurricane force winds and significant tidal flooding. In 1960, Hurricane Donna caused heavy seas, tidal flooding and flooding rains. This hurricane produced high winds recorded over 150 mph at the Chesapeake Light Tower on the southern portion of the Eastern Shore.

A major flood event occurred during March 6-8, 1962, known as the "Ash Wednesday Storm". The Island experienced severe flooding over most of the Island. Several homes were destroyed during this event. All utilities, including water and electricity were out for several weeks due to the damage sustained during this event. Many Island residents were evacuated due to tidal flood heights reaching 4 to 5 feet in some areas.

Since 1991, the Island experienced several Nor'easters that have caused considerable damage. Most of the damage has been to docks, bulkheads and minor residential & commercial flooding. Most of the flooding problems have been to structures located below the base flood elevation along the banks of the Chincoteague and Assateague Channels and along Fowling Gut in the center of the Island.

Your property may be high enough that it has not flooded recently. However, it can still be flooded in the future because the next flood could be worse. The majority of the Island of Chincoteague is located in a floodplain; thus, the odds are that someday your property could be damaged. This flyer gives you some ideas of what you can do to protect yourself.

**Town Flood Services:** The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard map. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Island Library located on Main Street. You can also visit the Town Municipal Complex at 6150 Community Drive to see what zone your property is located in the floodplain. The Town also has a list of Virginia contractors, engineers, and architects licensed within the Town of Chincoteague who can assist with flood protection measures.

### What You Can Do:

- Do not dump or throw anything into the ditches, ponds, guts or channels. Even grass clippings and branches can accumulate and plug drainage ways. A plugged drainage way cannot carry water and will cause pooling and/or flooding in adjacent areas.
- If your property is next to a ditch, pond, gut or channel, please do your part and keep the banks clear of brush and debris.
- If you see dumping, accumulations or debris in the ditches, contact the local Building and Zoning Administrator.
- Always check with the Building Department before you build, 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 permit posted, contact the Building Department at 336-6519.

**Flood Proofing:** There are several different ways to protect a building from flood damage. One way is to keep the water away by regrading your lot or building a small floodwall or earthen berm. These methods work if your lot is large enough, flooding is not too deep or your property is not in the floodway. The Building Department can provide additional information.

Another approach is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorway. This method is not recommended for houses if water levels rise over two feet deep.

A third, more permanent approach is to raise the house above the base flood elevation. A small wood frame house can be elevated for less than \$10,000.00.

Several homes throughout the Island have been elevated within the last few of years.

These measures are called flood proofing or retrofitting. More information is available in the Public Library on Main Street. Any alteration to your building requires a permit from the local Building Department.

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 flooding. However, because the Town of Chincoteague 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.**

**Flood insurance is required by banks when a mortgage or home improvement loan is obtained.** Coverage can be obtained on both the structure and its contents if desired. During the kind of flooding that occurs on Chincoteague, there is usually more damage to the furniture and contents than to the structure. If you are covered, check your coverage limits and make sure you have enough coverage. Remember, even if the last flood missed you or you have done some flood proofing, the next flood could be worst. Flood insurance covers all surface floods. Don't wait until it's too late, buy flood insurance policy today. You can contact your current insurance agent today to purchase a flood insurance policy.

### **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. If you see flooding streets, Turn around, don't drown.

Stay away from power lines and electric wires. The number two flood killer is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the Power Company or Town Police Department.

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 are wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

Look out for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that may have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things 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 ventilated.

### **Flood Warning Systems and Notification:**

Accomack County currently operates the E-911 System for the Island. All assistance needed for fire and ambulance is dispatched from the Accomack Department of Public Safety, 24420 Lankford Hwy, Tasley, VA 23441. The Emergency Operation Center operates from The Town of Chincoteague Municipal Complex location at 6150 Community Drive, Chincoteague Island, VA 23336. In case of an event such as possible flooding, Hurricanes, nor' Easters or other natural disasters the EOC is activated to monitor imminent threats to the area. If the event warrants action by the EOC, the Town's Public Warning System is activated. In turn, all TV stations on the Island through the local cable television company will be interrupted, and a live broadcast will be made to advise all residents of possible life threatening events and procedures to evacuate the Island if necessary. The EOC also produces a Code Red reverse call-out type of call in addition to this broadcast, along with the local radio station, WESR 103.3 F.M., CTG 96.5 F.M., the NOAA radio weather station to alert local residents, the Town's website: [www.chincoteague-va.gov](http://www.chincoteague-va.gov), the Town's Facebook page and the Town's EOC Facebook page. Hurricane alerts are issued a minimum of 24 hours prior to the predicted landfall giving adequate time to evacuate the Island. If emergency situations occur, the local Fire Department along with the Town Police Department alert residents of evacuation plans.

Call 757-336-6519 for more information.