

## Town of Topsail Beach Flood Protection Information

The dominant source of flooding in Topsail Beach is wind driven water surge generated in the Atlantic Ocean by tropical storms and hurricanes. The surge extends into Topsail Inlet, Topsail Island, and Topsail Sound. The most serious threat of flooding is during the hurricane season, June through November. Most properties seaward of Topsail Beach are in the coastal AE Zone.

North Carolina experiences hurricanes, tropical storms, and severe extra-tropical cyclones, usually referred to as a "Northeaster". Unlike a hurricane, which may pass over a coastal location in a fraction of a day, a northeaster may blow from the same direction and over long distances for several days.

Storms, such as Hurricane Ophelia (2005), Hurricane Floyd (1999), and Hurricane Fran (1996), produced severe floods, as well as extensive structural damage. In September of 2005, Hurricane Ophelia produced over 14 inches of rainfall, covering roadways, prompting five dune breaches, producing extensive primary dune loss, and washing away over 90 percent of beach access stairs. Hurricane Irene hit the Town of Topsail Beach in 2011, producing between 10-14 inches of rainfall and hurricane force winds, destroying over 25% of the town's beach.

### Town Flood Services

The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard zone. You can visit the Building Inspection Department Town Hall to see if you are in a mapped floodplain. If so, they can give you more information such as depth of flooding over a building's first floor and copies of Elevation Certificates on buildings built in the floodplain since 1997. Call the Department at 910-328-5841 or drop by the Town Hall Town at 820 S. Anderson Blvd, Town of Topsail Beach, NC, where the information can be obtained. There is no charge for this service.

**Every Family Should Have a Family  
Emergency Plan. For more  
information, visit:**

[www.ready.gov/america/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html)

## Flood Protection and Safety

### SAFETY IS THE #1 PRIORITY

Turn off all utilities. Close the main gas valve.  
Store important documents in waterproof containers.  
Take your trash cart inside or tie it down.  
If you're caught in the house by suddenly rising water, move to a second floor and, if necessary, to the roof.  
Let your friends and relatives know where you are evacuating.  
Remember to include your pets as part of your evacuation plan.  
Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.  
Do not walk through flowing water. Do not drive through a flooded area.

### Property Protection Measures

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

#### Emergency Measures:

Place sandbags to hold back rising water  
Keep water away by re-grading your lot  
Keep water away by building levees or a small floodwall  
Move furniture and equipment to upper floors

#### Permanent measures:

Make your walls waterproof  
Place watertight closures over doorways  
Raise the house above flood levels  
Relocate

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published: **The Design Manual for Retrofitting Floodprone Residential Structures**. This publication presents a series of permanent retrofitting measures that can be incorporated into an existing building to reduce or eliminate the potential of future flooding. The manual can be ordered free of charge:

FEMA Distribution Center  
8241-A Sandy Court  
P. O. Box 2012  
Jessup, MD 20794  
ATTN: Publications  
1-800-480-2520

<http://www.fema.gov/nfip/forms.shtm>

## Natural and Beneficial Floodplain Functions

Undisturbed floodplains provide a wide range of benefits, such as:

**Natural flood and erosion control:** provides flood storage and conveyance and reduces flood velocity.

**Water quality:** filters nutrients and impurities from runoff.

**Groundwater recharge:** reduces frequency and duration of surface flow.

**Biological resources:** supports high rate of plant growth, provides breeding and feeding grounds and enhances waterfowl habitat.

**Societal resources:** provides open space and aesthetic pleasures. Also, in areas of scientific study provides opportunities for environmental research.

## Floodplain Development Permit Requirements

All properties located in the "Special Flood Hazard Area" on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map are subject to regulations.

*Q: What is subject to these regulations?*

*A: Any man made change to improved or unimproved property, such as:*

*Buildings-Excavation-Dredging-Filling-Grading-Paving.*

The community may levy a fine and/or obtain a court order to have the owner correct the construction, if built without a permit or if not built according to the approved plans. For information on floodplain development or to report illegal floodplain development, contact the local permit office at 910-328-5841.

## Substantial Improvement Requirements

A "substantial improvement" is any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvement to a building, when the cost exceeds 50% of the market value of the building before the start of construction of the improvement. However, when the building is damaged and the cost of restoring the building to its before-damage condition exceeds 50% of the market value prior to the damage occurring, it is termed "substantial damage". New construction or substantial improvement of any structure (residential, commercial, industrial, or nonresidential) located in a special flood hazard area shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated to or above the base flood elevation. Contact your local permit office for rules and requirements regarding "substantial improvement" and "substantial damages".

**Topsail Beach Flood Plain Manager -  
Tel: 910-328-5841**

