

Flooding...

typically occurs after several days of heavy rain. After the ground is saturated flooding can occur very quickly with little or no warning if a particularly powerful storm burst occurs. While the District's many reservoirs provide some buffer between rainfall and creekflow on some streams, most creeks do not have a reservoir upstream, and levels rise quickly during intense rainstorms.

When creeks overbank, the floodwater typically flows swiftly through neighborhoods and away from streams. Dangerously fast-moving floodwaters can flow thousands of feet away from the flooded creek within minutes.

While the chances seem slim for a flood in the 1% floodplain (the area designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year), the real odds of a 1% flood increase to greater than 1 in 4 during the length of a 30-year mortgage.

Creeks that flood

These Santa Clara County creeks are known to flood:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Adobe Creek | Los Gatos Creek |
| Alamias Creek | Lower Silver Creek |
| Alamitos Creek | Loyola Creek |
| Arroyo Calero Creek | Pajaro River |
| Barron Creek | Permanente Creek |
| Berryessa Creek | Purissima Creek |
| Calabazas Creek | Quimby Creek |
| Calera Creek | Randol Creek |
| Canoas Creek | Ross Creek |
| Corralitos Creek | San Francisquito Creek |
| Coyote Creek | San Tomas Aquino Creek |
| Crosley Creek | Santa Teresa Creek |
| Deer Creek | Saratoga Creek |
| Dexter Creek | Shannon Creek |
| East Little Llagas Creek | Sierra Creek |
| Edmundson Creek | Smith Creek |
| Fisher Creek | South Babb Creek |
| Fowler Creek | Stevens Creek |
| Gavilan Creek | Sunnyvale West Channel |
| Greystone Creek | Upper Penitencia Creek |
| Guadalupe River | Upper Silver Creek |
| Hale Creek | Uvas-Carnadero Creek |
| Heny Creek | Vasona Creek |
| Jones Creek | West Branch Llagas Creek |
| Llagas Creek | West Little Llagas Creek |
| Los Coches Creek | Wildcat Creek |

To report...

street flooding or blocked storm drains, or to contact your local floodplain manager call:

Campbell	408.866.2100
Cupertino	408.777.3200
Gilroy	408.846.0400
Los Altos	650.947.2700
Los Altos Hills	650.941.7222
Los Gatos	408.354.6834
Milpitas	408.586.3000
Monte Sereno	408.354.7635
Morgan Hill	408.779.7271
Mountain View	650.903.6300
Palo Alto	650.329.2100
San José	408.535.3500
Santa Clara	408.615.2200
Saratoga	408.868.1200
Sunnyvale	408.730.7500
Unincorporated	408.299.5700

The Santa Clara Valley Water District

manages wholesale drinking water resources and provides stewardship for the county's five watersheds, including 10 reservoirs, more than 800 miles of streams and groundwater basins. The Water District also provides flood protection throughout Santa Clara County.



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Palo Alto, Stanford, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, Cupertino, Saratoga, Monte Sereno, portions of Sunnyvale, San Jose and unincorporated areas of the county

At large- North County: Tony Estremera

At large- South County: Sig Sanchez

Stay safe before, during and after a flood!

www.valleywater.org • 408.265.2600

The local flood hazard

In Santa Clara County, flooding is caused by overbanking from local creeks, or potentially from extremely high tides in San Francisco Bay.

"Localized flooding" also occurs when storm drains cannot convey rainfall from streets to the creeks fast enough. More than 50 creeks in Santa Clara County are known to cause significant flooding.

If you received this in the mail, your property is in or near the floodplain of one of those creeks.

Look inside for more information on how you can stay safe...



Photo: Downtown San Jose flooding from the Guadalupe River in 1995. This area is now protected from the 100-year flood due to the completion of the Guadalupe River Flood Protection Project in 2005.

Stay safe before, during and after a flood

What you can do to protect your property from flooding

- Have a licensed plumber install “check valves” in sewer traps to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home.
- Periodically examine your property for flood risks. Seal any cracks in the foundation and exterior walls of your home and seal small openings around pipes with grout or concrete, crack filler or caulk.
- Gather emergency building materials, such as plywood, plastic sheeting and sandbags. [For sandbag locations and to find out how to use them, visit \[www.valleywater.org\]\(http://www.valleywater.org\) or call 1.888.439.6624.](#)
- Construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Inspect rain gutters and drainage; consider tarping or seeding any unvegetated slopes on your property.

Before a flood

- Prepare a family disaster plan for floods, earthquakes and fires. Make an emergency kit for your home and for your car with emergency supplies such as flashlight, batteries, water and non-perishable food. Move insurance policies, documents and other valuables to a safe deposit box.
- Be aware of the locations of streams and drainage channels in your neighborhood. (see the list of local “creeks that can flood” on the back).
- Learn how to turn off utilities to your home, and keep your car’s gas tank full so you won’t be stranded.
- The smartest thing you can do to prepare for floods is [purchase flood insurance](#).

During a flood

- Be aware that flash flooding can occur and move immediately to higher ground.
- Tune to local radio, such as KLIV (AM 1590), KCBS (AM 740) and KSJO (92.3 FM), or TV for emergency information, traffic updates and instructions.
- If you must evacuate, turn off utilities at the main switches or valves. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Evacuation is easier and safer before floodwaters become too deep.
- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you, and to aid in balance.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away. A foot of water will float many vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including SUVs and pick-ups.

After a flood

- Listen for news reports on whether the community’s water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Never try to walk, swim, drive or play in floodwater.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters. Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewage systems are serious health hazards.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.



Do I need flood insurance?

Your homeowners insurance does not cover losses from flooding. And assistance from the federal government in the form of reconstruction loans would be offered only if a federal emergency is declared. Unlike disaster loans, flood insurance payments won’t need to be repaid.

Federal law requires flood insurance if you have a federally regulated mortgage and your building is in an area shown on maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as subject to flooding during a 100-year event. Lenders are legally responsible for determining if a flood insurance policy is required for a loan, but your city will provide you assistance in reading and interpreting the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map. [Contact the floodplain manager for your city, using the telephone numbers listed on the back.](#) (If you need additional assistance, call the Community Projects Review Unit of the Water District at 408.265.2607, ext. 2650). There is a 30 - day waiting period before flood insurance takes effect. Contents coverage is separate, so renters can insure their belongings. Most insurance agents sell it: call 1.888.724.6978, or go online at Floodsmart.gov to find a local agent.



Special permits required in floodplains

All construction within a FEMA-designated floodplain requires a permit from your local municipality. Contact your community’s building regulatory department for more information before you build, grade or fill. [Use the contact phone list provided on the back.](#)

Healthy creek ecosystems

A healthy stream is an irreplaceable natural resource and a wonderful amenity that can bolster a property’s value. Make the most of your local creeks by helping to keep them healthy. Through proper care of stream banks and riparian vegetation, you can enhance your property, prevent erosion problems, avoid flood losses, preserve water quality, and contribute to the survival of fish and wildlife. [Over the next 15 years, the Water District plans to restore an estimated 100 acres of tidal and/or riparian habitat. This will help with ecological and natural flood protection functions throughout the county.](#)

Working together as members of the Water Resources Protection Collaborative, representatives from the Water District, cities, the county and business, agriculture, streamside property owners and environmental interests created a manual of model guidelines and standards for land-use near streams. This manual can help creekside property owners large and small to make the right decisions in caring for their property. Find a copy at www.valleywater.org.

Keeping debris out of creeks helps water flow

Creeks are a valuable natural resource that not only support sensitive wildlife and ecosystems, but also serve as natural drainage systems, carrying stormwater away from homes, roads and businesses, and safely to the bay. For our waterways to carry more water during heavy rainfall, it is important that creeks are kept free of trash and debris, which can impede the flow of water and cause flooding. While most people realize that trash and man-made chemicals should not go into a creek, many don’t know that yard waste, leaves and soil also pollute a creek and can obstruct water flow, resulting in flooding and erosion.

[Where we own the creek or have easement, the Water District repairs creek banks and levees, removes sediment from creek channels, inspects waterways and cleans up illegally dumped items such as shopping carts, cans and general litter.](#)

Do not dump

It is illegal to dump anything into a creek or storm drain. You can help keep the storm drain and flood management systems operating at capacity by reporting incidents of illegal dumping. Drains in your street flow directly to local creeks. Storm drain systems, the gutters and drains in the street are all maintained by cities. To report localized flooding caused by blocked storm drains - call your city’s public works department. Their phone numbers are listed on the back. [To report illegal dumping, call the Santa Clara Valley Water District Illegal Dumping Hotline \(24 hours\) 1.888.510.5151.](#)