

Climate change will affect different areas of Maryland differently. Most areas will likely experience heavier rains, stronger storms, more frequent droughts, and more extreme heat waves. Coastal areas will also experience the effects of rising sea levels.

Choose one or more activities from each applicable category below to reduce your – and your family’s – risk.

INTENSE STORMS

cause loss of power and water, injure and kill people, and damage infrastructure

- Develop a family emergency plan and evacuation route¹
- Create a family emergency kit for both your home and car²
- Know your neighbors, and develop check-in plans with them

EXTREME HIGH HEAT

and related air pollution are dangerous—especially to young children, the elderly, and people in poor health—increasing the odds of asthma and heart attacks, and heat stroke³

- Plant trees on your property and/or install a white roof or “green” roofing⁴
- Know the symptoms of excessive heat exposure and the appropriate responses
- See if your utility will pay *you* to cycle your air conditioning unit on and off during peak usage periods, keeping older, more polluting power plants offline

During high heat events:

- Use air conditioning or spend time in cooled locations (e.g., malls or libraries)
- Drink water frequently
- Check on neighbors—especially older and sick people—who may need help
- Don’t leave children or pets alone in cars, even for a few minutes

DROUGHTS

reduce available water supplies and increase the risk of wildfires, especially during summer months

Conserve water:

- Install low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators
- Decrease toilet water usage by adjusting flush valves or installing dams on existing units, or by purchasing a low-flow model
- Buy water-efficient appliances, like dishwashers and washing machines, when old ones wear out
- Use rain barrels to collect water for outdoor use
- Use drought-tolerant native plants in landscaping

Protect against wildfires:

- Keep wide clear zones around buildings near grasslands, woodlands and forests
- Maintain vegetated stream buffers to keep better stream flows throughout the year
- Have at least two alternatives for evacuation in the event of wildfire outbreaks in the area

HEAVY RAINS

result in more flooding, and increases in water- and insect-borne illnesses

Flood-proof your home:

- Find out whether your home’s flood risk is changing⁵
- Check to ensure your home is insured against flood damage (standard homeowners insurance does not cover flooding)⁶
- Keep gutters clean, and direct water away from the foundation
- Watch for water pooling near your home, and redirect the water with changes in the slope of the ground and installing better drainage
- Do not build in high flood risk areas, but if your home is already built, elevate your furnace, water heater and electric panel; seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds; use flood-damage resistant materials



Effective Actions for Individuals and Families

CLIMATE PROTECTION

HEAVY RAINS, CONTINUED

Guard against insect bites:

- When outdoors in areas with ticks and mosquitoes, use repellants and wear light-colored protective clothing
- Don't allow standing water to collect in areas near your home, even in small quantities, such as in saucers under plants
- Use fine screens to keep mosquitos away from water in rain barrels

Defend against contaminated water:

- Well or septic system owners should perform regular maintenance (pump septic, check and replenish well filtration system)
- Maintain supply of drinking water to accommodate family members for up to 72 hours (after flooding or other extreme events, wells and community water systems may be contaminated)
- Stay away from water that appears discolored, "scummy" or matted with algae as it may be toxic; do not let children or pets play in these areas
- Avoid contact with water that may be high in bacteria.
- For at least 48 hours after a heavy rainfall, beware of beaches—find out more by searching the Maryland beaches database⁷

SEA-LEVEL RISE

will expand tidal ranges and flooding, increase the floodplain "footprint", and create more erosion, high tides, and storm surge damage, including permanent flooding of some coastal areas

- Check your home's flood risk⁵
- Ensure your home is insured against flood damage (standard homeowners insurance does not cover flooding)⁶
- Protect and restore natural storm barriers, such as aquatic vegetation, wetland areas, and beaches
- Elevate your home *above* predicted flood heights
- Engage members of your community in discussing short- and long-term planning options

¹ See template and individual family member cards at:

http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FamEmePlan_2012.pdf

² <http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit>

³ <http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/about/heatguidebook-brief.html>

⁴ <http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/mitigation/greenroofs.htm>

⁵ <http://www.fema.gov/protecting-homes/view-your-communitys-preliminary-flood-hazard-data>

⁶ http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/residential_coverage/rc_overview.jsp

⁷ <http://www.marylandhealthybeaches.org/notification.aspx>