



## FLOOD INFORMATION

- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. If your house is about to be flooded, turn off the power at the service box. Electrical current can travel through water. Electrocution is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death during floods.
- Be alert to gas leaks. Turn off the gas to your house before it floods. If you smell gas, report it to a City official or your gas company. Do not use candles, lanterns or open flames if you smell gas or are unsure if your gas has been shut off.
- Keep children away from the flood waters, ditches, culverts and storm drains. Flood waters can carry unimaginable items that have dislodged themselves. Culverts may suck smaller people into them rendering them helpless.
- Clean everything that has been wet. Flood water will be contaminated with sewage and other chemicals which pose severe health threats.
- Look out for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that have been flooded out of their home may seek shelter in yours.
- Do not use gas engines, such as generators, or charcoal fires indoors during power outages. Carbon monoxide exhaust can pose serious health hazards.

## FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The City of Sycamore has two rivers and a creek that define its floodplain: The South Branch of the Kishwaukee River, the East Branch of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River, and Heron Creek. After a severe rain event they are all capable of producing slow rising overbank flooding.

Prior storm events resulted in the East Branch of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River flooding the Sycamore Municipal Golf Course and impacted several businesses along State Street (Route 64). They also temporarily closed Route 64 and Route 23. These storms produced overbank flooding of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River which resulted in floodwaters climbing into the backyards of residents of Edgebrook and nearly overtopped Coltonville Road. In large storm events Heron Creek will occasionally jump Route 23 near Swanson Road and create a traffic hazard.

Information can be obtained from the City Engineer at 541 DeKalb Avenue, Sycamore, IL 60178 on whether your property is in the 100-year floodplain. Maps are available to look at as well as other flood-related information. The City of Sycamore also has Elevation Certificates for new or existing developments. Contact the City Engineer's office at (815) 895-4557 for further assistance.

## FLOOD SAFETY

The following common sense guidelines can help you from the dangers of flooding:

- Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in cars than any where else. Do not drive around barriers.

- Do not walk through flowing water. Currents can be deceptive. Six inches of water can knock you off your feet.

## PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

If your property is susceptible to flooding, there are many flood damage reduction measures you can employ.

- Watertight seals can be applied to brick and block walls to protect against low-level flooding.
- Utilities such as heating and air conditioning systems, water heaters and other major appliances can be elevated to higher floors in the structure or on raised platforms.
- Temporary measures such as moving furniture and other valuables to higher floors or sandbagging exterior openings will also help.
- Elevating or relocating the entire structure may also be a feasible option.

## FLOODPLAIN PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

All development within the 100-yr. floodplain (not just construction of buildings, but filling, excavation, fences, etc.) is required to obtain a City of Sycamore Building Permit. Applications must be made prior to doing any work in a floodplain area. Please contact the City Building Director at (815) 895-4434 or the City Engineer at (815) 895-4557 to receive all the information regarding developing in a floodplain area. You may report any illegal development activities to the above numbers as well.

## **SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT/DAMAGE**

The NFIP requires that if the cost of improvements to a building or the cost to repair damages (from any cause) to a building exceeds 50% of the market value of the building (excluding land value), the entire building must be brought up to current floodplain management standards. Building improvement projects include exterior and interior remodeling, rehabilitation, additions and repair and reconstruction projects. Additionally, the cost of currently planned improvements will be added to the cost of previously made improvements and compared to the existing market value to determine if the improvements exceed 50% of the structure's value. Please contact the City Engineer at (815) 895-4557 for further information.

## **FLOOD INSURANCE**

If you do not have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. Flood insurance is only available to those participating communities in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Because of our floodplain management programs that attempt to protect us from the multiple flooding hazards, Sycamore is part of the NFIP and thus, residents are able to obtain flood insurance. Additionally, because the City participates in FEMA's CRS program, flood insurance premiums are discounted.

Be sure to check your policy to ensure you have adequate coverage. Usually these policies cover the building structure, but not the contents. Contents coverage can also be obtained by asking your agent. There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance coverage becomes effective. Plan ahead; do

not wait until a flood is predicted before purchasing flood insurance.

If you are building inside the floodplain, the purchase of flood insurance is mandatory if using a federally regulated/insured bank for a loan.

## **NATURAL & BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS**

Floodplains play a valuable role in providing natural and beneficial functions to the area around, and including, Sycamore. Floodplains that are relatively undisturbed provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. These benefits provide aesthetic pleasure as well as function to provide active processes such as filtering nutrients. Areas east and west of Peace Road south of Freed Road and North of Route 64 in the East Branch of the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River are used as a means to filter farm chemical run-off so that these areas can maintain biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability. Both enhance waterfowl, fish and other wildlife habitats and provide feeding/breeding grounds. And lastly, these floodplains provide natural erosion control and open space so further flooding damage does not occur.

## **DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

As simple as it may sound, simply keeping smaller ditches and streams free of debris can dramatically improve the run-off capacity of low-lying areas, as well as greatly reduce the occurrence blockage that significantly contributes to flooding. It is illegal to dump materials into a required waterway and violators may be fined. If you see someone in the act of dumping or see debris in one of our watercourses, please contact the Sycamore Public Works Department at (815) 895-3545.

## **FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM**

Tune your radio to WLBK – 1360 AM for local and National Weather Service Updates. You will also see regular interruption on local radio and television stations advising you of the situation. Contact the City of Sycamore's Police or Fire Department in case of Emergency.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you should require further or more detailed information regarding flood-related issues in Sycamore, here are some additional sources:

- FEMA.gov website
- City Engineer's Office (815) 895-4557  
475 N. Cross Street  
Sycamore, IL 60178
- [www.cityofsycamore.com](http://www.cityofsycamore.com) – Flood Information page.
- Sycamore Public Library

L:\Engineering Department\Floodplain Management\Community Rating System (CRS)