

## **Most Frequently Asked Flood Questions**

*By Evelyn Prim, Communications Coordinator*

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Four weeks ago, the City of Montpelier and our surrounding communities experienced catastrophic flooding. The water has left, along with a few thousand tons of disaster debris, but much of the work remains ahead.

There's a lot of information circulating out there, and it can feel overwhelming at times. The City is committed to helping you sort through it all and connect you with the information you need to repair, recover, and rebuild.

As we transition from emergency management into disaster recovery, keeping our community informed and connected is more important than ever. The City is working diligently to keep our [Flood Disaster Recovery Assistance](#) page fresh and updated with the latest information as it develops. Visit the page here: <https://bit.ly/MontpelierFlood2023Resources>

Because of the sheer size of the flood, many of us are experiencing the same challenges. The silver lining of this is what we can learn from each other. Your questions to us over the past month have helped us create a body of knowledge and resources open for all to use. As we continue along with disaster recovery, please don't hesitate to reach out to City staff if you have questions or concerns.

## **The Most Frequently Asked Flood Questions:**

### **Where can I do business with the City of Montpelier while City Hall is being repaired?**

The Clerk's Office, Planning, and Finance Departments are now almost fully operational at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center. We now have some phones, but email is still the best way to reach City staff. You may also visit our offices which are ADA-accessible, at 58 Barre Street between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

### **Will the reappraisal appeal dates be changed? How will the assessments on damaged buildings be handled?**

The current grievance process is to finalize the reappraisal that was required by the State of



Vermont and completed for the City of Montpelier by New England Municipal Consultants. Values are determined as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Any property owner seeking relief in property taxes due to flood damage can do so through the abatement process. If a property has not been repaired by April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, then an adjustment in assessed value will be made at that time. Abatement applications can be found on the City Clerk's web page. If you have any questions about the reappraisal process, please contact the Assessor, Marty Lagerstedt, at 802-223-9505. For questions about the abatement process, please contact the City Clerk, John Odum, at 802-223-9500.

### **When is the next due date for property taxes?**

At this time, the City is still undergoing the reappraisal process, which affects the due date of property taxes. Due to the flood, grievance hearings related to the reappraisal have been delayed. Tax bills have not gone out yet. The first quarter installment date will be later than normal but has not yet been set because the reappraisal is not yet complete. The City estimates that property tax bills will be mailed out on September 1<sup>st</sup> and due on October 1<sup>st</sup>. This will also include the business personal property tax.

### **Where can I get individual assistance from FEMA?**

FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are fixed locations where you can check the status of your FEMA application and get answers to other questions regarding federal assistance. DRCs are currently in five locations throughout Vermont:

**Plainfield:** Twinfield Union School, 106 Nasmith Brook Road

**Londonderry:** Flood Brook School, 91 VT Route 11

**Barre:** Barre Auditorium, 16 Auditorium Hill, Barre

**Rutland:** Asa Bloomer Building, 88 Merchants Row

**Waterbury:** Armory, 29 Armory Drive

For more information about DRCs, check out the Vermont Emergency Management website here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/flood/registration>.

### **Where is the Multi-Agency Resource Center?**

The MARC is a single location where public and private organizations come together to aid those affected by the disaster. MARC locations rotate throughout the state every three days and are open from 9:00am to 5:00pm unless otherwise posted. Check out the Vermont Emergency Management flood resource webpage for current locations and more information on MARCs in Vermont here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/flood/marc>.

### **I heard the first pass of debris pickup is complete, but my pile is still here. When will my debris be picked up?**

The first pass of disaster debris pickup is nearly complete in both residential and commercial areas. Commercial areas are eligible for one pass of debris removal, but residential debris removal is eligible for an additional pass.

The contractor will be starting the second pass of residential debris removal on Monday, August 7th. If you still have disaster debris from your residence that has not been removed yet, please make sure it is set out in the debris pickup zone in front of your residence and separated as shown in the graphic on the City's website.

### **What's the status of City recreation activities and scheduled events?**

The Community Services Department has needed to adjust planned recreational activities and events in Montpelier due to flood-damaged parks and greenspaces. For the latest information

about the Montpelier Senior Activity Center (MSAC), recreation, and parks updates, visit the City's website at <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/>

### **Do I need a permit to complete flood damage repairs?**

All repair work, both already completed and planned, needs permits from both City and possibly State Electrical. No more work should be happening without permits. Emergency or temporary repairs may only be allowed on a case-by-case basis and only after inspection by the Building Inspector. During the initial flood emergency, the City allowed residents to perform emergency temporary repairs *first* and secure a permit *after* the repair was made. This deference was meant to expedite the repair and flood recovery process, not to eliminate the need for permits.



### **Do I need to elevate my utilities out of the basement?**

If you own property in the River Hazard Area, any changes to your utilities need to meet the existing regulatory requirements. Utilities include electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing, and other service facilities.

Montpelier participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Community Rating System (CRS), which requires elevating utilities above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to ensure these utilities are protected from flood waters. Replacing building utilities within the River Hazard Area requires River Hazard and Building Permits.

### **How can I find out if my property is in the River Hazard Area?**

Email Audra Brown! Audra is the City of Montpelier Planning and Zoning Assistant and Certified Flood Plain Manager. Reach out to Audra at [abrown@montpelier-vt.org](mailto:abrown@montpelier-vt.org).

### **I live outside the River Hazard Area. Do I have to elevate my utilities?**

No. Structures outside the River Hazard Area do not need to make these changes. If you are outside the River Hazard Area but did experience flooding, you may want to consider some of these modifications. The Planning and Community Development can help advise you on how to implement these changes.