



BOROUGH OF ETNA NEWSLETTER

Annual Public Safety Edition

October 2016



The following information is being provided by the Borough of Etna as part of their voluntary participation in the Community Rating System (CRS). Voluntary participation by a municipality in this program can and has lowered the Borough's Class Rating, which **gives any property owner or renter purchasing flood insurance a discount on their premium**. Etna is now a Class 8, which provides a 10% discount on all federal flood insurance policy premiums purchased for property located in Etna.

KNOW YOUR HAZARD: What Can Cause Flooding in Etna?

Flooding in Etna can be caused by three direct sources and several storms "runs." West Little Pine Creek, Pine Creek and the Allegheny River are all considered direct sources and the storm "runs" in the Borough that can cause flooding in specific areas are the Park Avenue Run, the Parker Street Run and the Ganster Street Run. The creeks and rivers can leave their banks during heavy storms, snowmelts or ice jams. When the Allegheny River crests beyond 26', flooding occurs in the low lying areas of Cherry and Sycamore Streets. The "runs" and smaller streams can flood during or soon after a heavy rain event. In these instances, floodwaters are not as deep, but they can cover streets and yards, flood cars, garages, basements and lower floors. Flooding in each of these areas can come with little warning. On previous occasions, the rainfalls only lasted thirty minutes or less and caused one or more of the "runs" to overflow. Your property may be high enough that it has not flooded recently, but it can still flood in the future because next time it could be worse. If you are in a floodplain, the odds are someday your property will be damaged if it hasn't been already. For flood gauge and other flood information go to: <http://etnaborough.org/flood-information.html>

KNOW YOUR HAZARD: Etna Borough Flood Map Services

The first thing you should do is check your flood hazard. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the municipal building where you can check and see if you are in a mapped floodplain. If you are, we can give you more information including the depth of flooding over a building's first floor and past flooding problems in the area. There are also handouts on selecting contractors for waterproofing, flood protection and glass block installation. There is no charge for the photocopying of this material. Reference materials are also available at the Shaler North Hills Library on Mt. Royal Blvd.; just ask for the Etna Flood Library section. You may also contact the Borough's engineer, Donald Newman, P.E. for elevation information, map service questions, flood proofing techniques and other flood related questions. There is no charge for this service. He can be reached at 412-261-5059. As a public service we will provide you with the following information upon request:

- Property's location to the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as shown on the current Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)
- Additional flood insurance data for a site, such as the FIRM zone and the base flood elevation or depth, if shown on the FIRM
- A handout on the flood insurance requirement that can help people who need a mortgage or loan for a property in the SFHA

If you would like to make an inquiry, please tell us the street address and lot and block number, if available. We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call us at 412-781-0569 or drop by the office for assistance. There is no charge for this service. The Building Department has completed FEMA Elevation Certificates for buildings that are constructed in the floodplain. Copies of FEMA elevation certificates on all buildings constructed in the floodplain for the past fifteen years are available. The map for the Borough of Etna is displayed in the lobby. You can also email the Borough Manager/Floodplain Administrator at meramage@etnaborough.org or find the map on FEMA's website by going to <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.

FLOOD SAFETY: Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

- **Do not walk through flowing water.** Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Six inches of water can knock a person off of their feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to make sure the ground is still there.
- **Do not drive through a flooded area.** Six inches of water can cause a vehicle to lose control and possibly stall. A foot of water will float many cars away. Do not drive around barricades because the road or bridge may be washed out beyond them.
- **Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.** Electrocutation is the second leading cause of death during flooding, after drowning. Report down power lines to Duquesne Light immediately or to the Police Dept.
- **Look before you step.** Floors, stairs and even the ground can be very slippery with mud after flooding. Debris, including broken glass or nails may also cover the ground surface.
- **Be alert for gas leaks.** Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area properly ventilated. Contact either Equitable or Peoples Gas to report leaks or call the Police Dept.
- **Look out for animals especially snakes.** Small animals that have been flooded out of their homes may seek shelter in yours. Use a pole or stick to poke and turn things over and scare away small animals.
- **Have your electricity turned off by the power company.** Some appliances such as televisions keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried.
- **Bookmark creek level monitoring page.** Visit <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=pbz&gage=pnep1> to monitor Pine Creek at Grant Avenue or <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/hydrograph.php?wfo=pbz&gage=etnp1> to monitor Pine Creek in upstream Shaler, then bookmark the page on your pc or add to home screen on your mobile device.



FLOOD WARNING PROCEDURES

During heavy rainfall, the police will monitor the levels of the Allegheny River, West Little Pine Creek and Pine Creek as well as all the storm runs located in the community. If and when preset benchmarks have been reached, the Volunteer Fire Department and the Emergency Dispatch Center will be notified. **If it is determined by the Emergency Management Committee and the Emergency Management Coordinator that flooding is a real possibility, the Emergency Siren will be activated.** When you hear the siren, immediately tune into A.M. Station 1670. This is the Borough's A.M. Alert Radio Station. The Borough will also activate *SwiftReach*, the Borough's reverse 911 calling system. Repeated calls will be made to all potentially threatened areas with specific instructions depending upon the circumstances. Both the radio station and calling system will provide instructions that may include warnings that flooding is a possibility and that you may choose to take steps in anticipation of possible flooding, such as moving items from the basement, plugging sewers, sand bagging or leaving the area until the threat has passed. If the Emergency Management Coordinator determines that flooding is likely, instructions for evacuation will be provided. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT SHOULD AN EVACUATION FOR YOUR AREA BE ORDERED, YOU SHOULD EVACUATE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY.** Should you choose not to evacuate, you may be forced to ride out the duration of the flooding, as it may be impossible or life threatening to emergency personnel to try and reach you.

FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPS (FIRM)

The **National Flood Insurance Program** use **Flood Insurance Rate Maps** to determine what areas are at risk. In 2014 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released the **FIRM** for Etna. This Map illustrates the extent of flood hazards in Etna and is used to determine who must buy flood insurance and the floodplain development regulations that apply in the flood risk zones depicted. In compliance with the new maps, Etna adopted Ordinance No. 1353, the Floodplain Management Ordinance. With this ordinance, the Borough adopted stricter standards for building and development in floodplains, floodways and flood hazard areas. A large, readable version of the Flood Rate Map (FIRM) for the Borough of Etna is displayed in the lobby of the municipal building for public viewing. Please also visit <http://www.etnaborough.org/flood-information.html> or for any FIRM go to <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/>. The new map panel numbers for Etna are as follows: Panel 352 of 558 – Map # 42003C0352H and Panel 214 of 558 – Map #42003C0214H.

INSURE YOUR PROPERTY

As a general statistic, there is a 25% chance of experiencing a flood during the life of a 30 year mortgage. A little known fact is that there is a 30 day waiting period before coverage goes into effect; **so don't wait until the next disaster to purchase flood insurance!** If you are a property owner or resident in the Special Flood Hazard Area, it is highly recommended that you purchase flood insurance. **HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE DOES NOT COVER DAMAGE FROM FLOODING.** However, because Etna Borough participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you may purchase a separate flood insurance policy on your property. For a copy of the book "Mandatory Purchase of Flood Insurance Guidelines" call the Borough Office at 412-781-0569 and one will be mailed to you at no cost. You can also receive information about flood insurance and disaster preparedness by calling the Department of Insurance, toll free, at **1-877-881-6388** or visiting their website at for on-line brochures. Before another disaster strikes, we encourage you to learn more about your risk, what to do to protect your property before, during and after a flood, how to purchase flood insurance by calling the National Flood Insurance Program at **1-888-379-9531** or by going on line at www.floodsmart.gov. Residents have purchased flood insurance because the bank required it when they got their mortgage or home improvement loan. These policies usually just cover the building's structure and **not the contents**. A separate policy can be purchased to cover the contents. The typical flooding that occurs in Etna routinely causes more damage to furniture and contents than to the structure itself. If you are currently covered by flood insurance, check out the amount and verify whether or not you have contents coverage. Go to www.floodsmart.gov for a listing of local agents (by zip code), policy rate information and much more.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY: Flood Proofing

There are several ways to protect a building from flood damage. One is to keep the water away by re-grading your lot or building a small floodwall or earthen berm. Another way is to make your walls waterproof and place watertight closures over the doorways. A third approach is to raise the house above flood levels. You can find detailed information on flood proofing at the Shaler North Hills Library at the Etna Flood Library section or online at www.fema.gov/media-library-data.

Many homes, though not in a floodplain, have sewers that backup into their basements during heavy rains. A plug or standpipe can stop this if the water does not get more than two feet deep. They are sold at local hardware and home improvement stores. For deeper sewer backups, speak to a plumber about overhead sewers or a backup valve. More information, including a list of contractors who do flood proofing and/or retrofitting, can be found in the Flood Library section of the Municipal Building or can be mailed to you upon request. You can speak to the Borough's engineer, Donald Newman, 412-261-5059 as well. **Any alteration to your building or land requires a permit from the Building and Zoning Department, including grading or filling in the floodplain.**

There is often very little notice of flooding, so a detailed checklist prepared in advance would be invaluable to you. Please review the enclosed Emergency Preparedness Checklist. Flood proofing your home **WHEN** the waters are rising:

- Electrical appliances should be unplugged IMMEDIATELY
- Move items from your basement to the first floor (or higher).
- Sandbag to prevent low level inundation
- Shut off the valve on your gas meter

BUILD RESPONSIBLY: Building Permits and Elevation Certificates

Any development in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) requires permits from the Building Department. Virtually all of Etna is developed, so new construction is rare; but any improvements, additions or repairs that equal or exceed 50% of the value of the building are treated as new construction. Substantially improved or substantially damaged residential building must be elevated up to or above the base flood elevation (lowest floor, including basement). To obtain a building permit, call the Borough office at 412-781-0569 or stop down to pick up the building permit package. All permit applications require two sets of plans and/or drawings with the completed application. As part of the permit review in the flood hazard area, the Borough's Floodplain Manager must also sign-off on the application to ensure full compliance with the ordinance. No new construction or development shall be located within fifty feet of the top-of-bank of any watercourse.

The Borough would like to thank those who participated in the Program for Public Information—a key component in the CRS. They include Meg Hill, Bob Casey, John Mertens, Mary Ellen Ramage, and Pete Ramage.

BOROUGH CONTACTS

For Emergencies Call: 911 (Allegheny County Comm. Center)
Borough Office: 412-781-0569 Fax: 412-782-5302
E-Mail: info@etnaborough.org
Web Page: www.etnaborough.org

Borough of Etna
437 Butler Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15223

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Thomas Rengers, Mayor	412-781-4191
	412-781-6271 x 14
Peter Ramage, Chairman	412-782-1488
David Becki, Vice Chairman	412-781-5793
Dave Farmerie, Councilman	412-782-2596
William O'Dell Councilman	412-782-6417
Rudy Milcic, Councilman	412-781-3609
Karen Tomaszewski, Councilwoman	412-781-6417
Greg Porter, Councilman	412-781-4786
Edward V. Burke, III, Councilman	412-781-8752
Ron Trader, Councilman	412-782-5742
Mary Ellen Ramage, Borough Manager	412-781-0569
Tim Rodman, Chief of Police	412-781-6271 x 11
<i>Etna Police Station Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.</i>	
After Hours Non-Emergency Number	412-473-3056
Greg Porter, Fire Chief	412-781-1155
Jeff Richmond, Public Works Director	412-781-0569 x 25
Bob Snyder, Code Enforcement	412-781-0569 x 16
Seneca Area EMS	412-781-8596
District Judge Bob Dzvonic	412-487-7630
Waste Management (Missed Pick-ups)	800-458-4090
Tax Collector, Germaine Pfeifer	412-781-0569 x 24
Keystone Municipal Collection	412-672-5900
National Flood Insurance Program	888-379-9531 or
Web Page:	https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/
FIRM maps:	http://msc.fema.gov/portal/

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Several of the Borough's efforts depend on your cooperation and assistance. **Here is how you can help:**

- Maintenance of the drainage system is critical in helping prevent or minimize the severity of flooding. The "runs" that were discussed earlier in this information are inspected weekly and after each rain event by the Public Works Department. Debris is removed such as fallen trees, rocks and other trash. Even the buildup of dirt and mud needs to be removed on a regular basis.
- **It is crucial that residents do not add to the natural buildup** by throwing any debris into these runs, over hillsides and creek banks, including grass clippings, tree limbs, branches, etc. Doing so is a violation of Borough Ordinance No.1215 and violations carry fines and penalties.
- If your property is next to a ditch, stream or "run," **please do your part and keep them clear of debris**. If you see someone dumping contact the Borough Office immediately, 412-781-0569 or the Police Department at 412-473-3056.
- Always **check with the Building Inspector before you build, alter, regrade or put fill on your property**. A permit may be required to ensure projects do not cause problems to other properties. If you see building or filling without a permit posted, please contact the Borough Office immediately at 412-781-0569. Etna Borough Storm Water Management Ordinance, Ordinance No. 1320 enacts requirements for the safe management of storm water runoff in accordance with the Pine Creek Watershed Management Plan adopted and approved pursuant to the Pennsylvania Storm Water Management Act (Act 167 of 1978, as amended) and establishes provisions for the submission and approval of storm water management plans prior to the issuance of any building permit and sets procedures for enforcing the provisions of this ordinance. Please refer to the enclosed flyers for information for preparation, protection and recovery.



Help protect natural environments and floodplain functions by **never dumping pollutants down the storm drain.**