



Public Works Agency  
— Alameda County —

# HOW TO BE WINTER STORM READY

## TIPS TO REDUCE FLOODING

When it rains, street drains help to keep neighborhoods from flooding. When leaves collect in gutters and block these drains, water can back up and cause ponding that slows or stops traffic and can even flood yards and homes. While fall is typically when leaves are most likely to collect in drains, it can happen at any time of the year.

You can help prevent flooding by paying attention to what's happening with the drains on your block. A few small maintenance actions on your property can also prevent stormwater from ponding.

## KEEP LEAVES AND DEBRIS OUT OF DRAINS

- Clogged/blocked storm grates are often the reason a street floods during a storm. Check storm drains near your home and business. Use a rake or broom to remove leaves and debris from the tops of storm drains, and place the material in your yard waste can.
- Avoid piling yard waste like fallen leaves and sticks in your yard, where it could wash into the storm drains. Keep it in a yard waste bin or other container.
- If an inlet or street drain appears to be blocked by leaves or debris, try to safely clear a channel to provide a path for the runoff. If the drain cannot be cleared, or if the cause of the blockage or flooding is uncertain, call (510) 670-5500.



## MAINTAIN YOUR GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

- Clean the gutters and drainage downspouts attached to your roof twice a year. Just one wind or rainstorm can clog a well-flowing drainage system.
- Inspect for leaks or damage to rain gutters that could cause a flat roof to flood.
- Direct flows from downspouts away from your foundation, without discharging flows to adjacent properties.
- Never discharge water over the edge of a steep hill.

## ASSESS YOUR YARD

Water is the most common cause of unstable slopes, mudslides and erosion. Check your property for signs of earth movement, such as leaning trees, or cracks in the soil or sidewalks. If you have a problem, contact a soils engineer (search the Internet for "Engineers-Geotechnical-Soils") to evaluate the situation.

Preventative planting can also help reduce the chance of a mudslide or flooding. However, avoid planting over side sewers that could create problems from plant roots in the future.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Weather Service, San Francisco Bay Region  
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/mtr/>

Preparing Personal Emergency Plans: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

FEMA Flood Insurance: [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation  
[www.acflood.org](http://www.acflood.org)