



News Release

Red Cross volunteers sharing flood protection tips with Rocky View County residents with door-to-door visits

Rocky View County, Alberta – March 28, 2019

The Canadian Red Cross is exploring new ways to help Bragg Creek, Langdon, and Beiseker residents understand how to reduce flood risks at their homes and prepare for flood-related emergencies. Starting on March 30, 2019, Red Cross volunteers will be going door to door to learn what families are already doing to reduce their flood risk, share additional flood protection tips, and provide residents with local flood protection and emergency preparedness resources.

Flooding is one of the most common environmental hazards in Canada. Between 1918 and 2018, there were 302 major flood events in Canada, accounting for over one third (37 per cent) of natural disasters occurring in the country during that time (Public Safety Canada, 2018). Most homeowners, however, are unaware of the risk. On average, only six per cent of Canadians are aware of the flood risks in their area (University of Waterloo, 2017).

The Canadian Red Cross has been a leader in emergency preparedness for many years, educating hundreds of thousands of Canadians about how to be prepared and the importance of emergency preparedness kits and planning. The flood protection door-to-door pilot program, developed in partnership with the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo, is being carried out in three Canadian communities in the spring of 2019. The purpose is to determine if one-on-one conversations with Red Cross volunteers can increase flood risk awareness and encourage cost-effective and practical action at the household level to reduce flood risk and prepare for flood-related emergencies.

Key facts

- In Bragg Creek, Langdon, and Beiseker this spring, Red Cross volunteers will be going door to door between March 30 and April 17, 2019 to speak with residents about preparing their home for possible flooding.
- Rocky View County communities were chosen because of their experience with severe flooding in 2013 across southern Alberta, and periodic spring flooding that affects various communities.
- Red Cross volunteers will not need to enter individual homes, but instead will make sure residents are aware of some simple tips and suggestions that could help reduce risk to their home, including:
 - Clearing debris from the nearest storm drain that may be blocking the drainage of water;
 - Storing valuables in watertight containers and moving them off the basement floor;



- Cleaning out the home's eavestroughs twice per year and extending downspouts to direct water a minimum of two metres away from the foundation;
- Testing the sump pump twice per year and installing a backup sump pump and battery.
- Following this pilot study, the Canadian Red Cross will evaluate the success of this method for educating and working with communities.

Mark Holzer, Emergency Management Manager in Alberta, said, *“Following years of experience assisting Canadians to prepare, respond and recover from flooding emergencies, we know many people have concerns that it is either too difficult or costly to implement protective solutions in their homes. However, this perception can put Canadians at risk and prove to be more expensive in the long run. Over the coming weeks, Red Cross volunteers, with the support of Rocky View County, will be sharing cost-effective and easy things that people can do in their own homes to be flood ready and keep them safe.”*

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About the Canadian Red Cross

In Canada and overseas, the Red Cross stands ready to help people before, during and after a disaster. As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – which is made up of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and 190 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies – the Canadian Red Cross is dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and throughout the world.

About the University of Waterloo

University of Waterloo is one of Canada's top innovation universities. With more than 36,000 students and the world's largest co-operative education system of its kind, its unmatched entrepreneurial culture, combined with an intensive focus on research, powers one of the top innovation hubs in the world. For more information, visit www.uwaterloo.ca.

About the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation

The Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation (Intact Centre) is an applied research centre with a national focus within the Faculty of Environment and the University of Waterloo. The Intact Centre works with homeowners, communities, government and businesses to identify and reduce the impacts of extreme weather and climate change. www.intactcentre.ca

CONTACTS

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