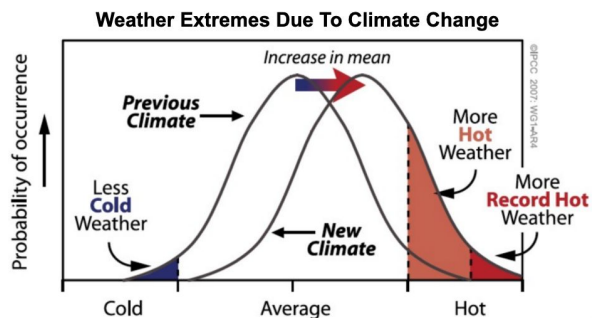


## Extreme weather in Virginia is becoming more common

**Tornado** events in Virginia have doubled over the past two decades, with over 200 tornadoes in the past 20 years in Virginia. These tornadoes have caused 441 injuries, 11 deaths, over \$250 million in property damage, and over \$2 million in crop damage. While studies are ongoing, tornado incidence and a warming climate may indeed have a link.

**Flooding** has increased in the past century, and will continue to increase. Flooding increases the risk of water contamination, which can cause gastrointestinal, respiratory, and skin infections. Additionally, fast-moving waters can be extremely dangerous.

**Extreme heat** in Virginia is also becoming much more frequent. Average daily summer high temperatures in parts of Richmond are 3°F greater than averages from the 1960s. Cities experience worse environmental heating due to asphalt (absorbs heat), tall buildings (hinder airflow), and lack of trees (limited shade). Impoverished communities are more vulnerable to extreme heat events.



**Preparedness is key when surviving these extreme weather events.**

The world's changing climate is fueled by human greenhouse gas emissions. The graph below projects the temperature increases we may see over the coming century under different environmental policies. As you can see, we have a lot of work to do! Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions is a challenge we must all meet if we want to limit the heating of our environment. Climate change may affect your health more than you realize. Allergies, asthma, mental health, diarrheal diseases, malnutrition, mosquito and tick-borne illness such as West Nile virus or Lyme disease, and heart failure all have proven links to a hotter climate.



In addition to all these horrible conditions, severe weather events are becoming more and more common. Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and extreme heat are all becoming more intense, so it is very important to learn how to prepare. Virginia is especially vulnerable to many extreme weather events, so open up the brochure to learn more!

#### SOURCES:

"Flood Water Safety." *Virginia Department of Health*, 18 May 2018, <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/public-relations-contacts/severe-weather-preparedness/flood-water-safety/>.  
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# EXTREME WEATHER PREPAREDNESS IN VIRGINIA



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# TORNADOES

# FLOODING

# EXTREME HEAT

## BEFORE

- Have supplies ready in a safe area, in case you get trapped. A flashlight, batteries, whistle, blanket, first aid kit, water, thick-soled boots and a radio are useful. If you have essential medications, create a "go bag" by stashing some in your basement or safe area.

- Know your flood risk using the FEMA Flood Map: <https://msc.fema.gov>
- Make an emergency plan with evacuation routes



- Learn the signs of heat-related illness
- Identify public buildings with air conditioning you can access
- Set up an attic ventilator or fan to reduce hot air accumulation

## DURING

- You may be alerted of a tornado by your TV, phone, sirens, or a radio. If these alert you, seek shelter immediately.
- If you are in a building with a basement, seek shelter in the basement.
- If you are in a building without a basement, go to a safe room without windows such as a closet, stairwell, or a bathroom with a mattress over the tub.

- If it is not safe to evacuate, keep a battery-operated AM/FM radio tuned to a local station and follow emergency instructions
- If you are stuck inside by rising water, move to a higher floor
- Do not use appliances connected to the building's electrical wiring or plumbing system
- Do not travel into areas where water covers the roadway

- Wear loose, lightly colored clothes
- Stay hydrated
- Take cool showers and baths
- Check-in with family and friends consistently
- Avoid high-energy tasks during the day such as yardwork or exercise
- Make sure your pets have appropriate shade, cooling, and water

## AFTER

- Stay in shelter until the area is clear.
- Visit for more information: <https://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/>



- If you come into contact with flood waters, thoroughly rinse any exposed belongings and parts of the body
- Be aware of local water supply safety; well water especially may not be safe to drink after a flood

- Continue checking-in with family and friends
- If you are having trouble affording cooling costs during extreme heat events, contact the Low Income Energy Assistance Program!