



Flooding – an imminent threat to our Low-lying Coast

Natural disasters can happen anywhere, at any time. Every region of the Earth is faced with the possibility of being affected by such disasters which often cause significant damage to the environment and loss of life.

Though Guyana is not prone to many or frequent natural disasters, its low-lying coast faces the imminent threat of flooding. As a consequence of Climate Change and the associated increase in frequency and intensity of rainfall there is a very real threat of flooding. The predicted rise in sea-level linked to Climate Change also poses the threat of flooding from the sea.



The majority of our population residing on the low coastal plain is vulnerable to the threat of flooding. So too are our agriculture, industrial and commercial sectors which are located on this narrow low-lying coastal strip.

In recent years flooding has occurred in the capital city Georgetown, along the East Coast of Demerara, along the banks of the Mahaica-Mahaicony and Abary rivers and along the West Coast Demerara and Pomeroon Rivers. Though not on the coastal belt, hinterland communities have also been affected by floods due to heavy rainfall e.g. Rupununi in 2011 and North and South Pakaraimas in 2010.

The main causes of flooding in Guyana are heavy rainfall, overflowing of rivers, and a breach in sea defence structures. Flooding is often exacerbated by the blockage of drains with garbage.



Impacts of flooding

✚ Flooding can occur quickly with little warning and has various impacts. Flooding causes damage to bridges, cars, buildings, roadways, houses, and other types of structure.

- ✚ Flooding also increases the risk of waterborne diseases, causing loss of life.
- ✚ Persons may also lose their lives by drowning.
- ✚ Water is often contaminated during flooding making it difficult to get potable water.
- ✚ The agricultural sector is also affected since there is damage to crops.
- ✚ The country's economy also takes a hit, since money has to be spent to cater for health care, food and repairing the damages caused by flooding.

Be prepared! Since flooding is an ever-present threat, it is important that we be prepared for any occurrence of flooding. Here are a few tips:

- To reduce the possibility of being severely affected by flooding, build houses on stilts instead of flat houses, especially along the coast.
- Do not litter, as this leads to the blocking of drains, increasing the risk of flooding.
- Keep valuables, and important documents in a safe place.
- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warning signals, evacuation routes, and locations of emergency shelters.
- Pack an emergency kit including; *a 3 – 5 day supply of non-perishable food and clean water, personal hygiene supplies, such as soap, toothpaste, a first aid kit including necessary medicine for special needs, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, and extra batteries.*



You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O EIT Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN or email us at eit.epaguyana@gmail.com