Lesson 3: Floods and Fires

Lesson 1 explained, in general, how to prepare for an emergency. Lesson 2 outlined ways to take care of many safety hazards that might exist in your home. This lesson addresses specific ways you can prepare for two potentially devastating occurrences—flood and fire. Taking these steps will enable you to safeguard yourself and your home in the event of an emergency.

Objectives
After completing this lesson, you will be able to
a.   prepare for a flood
b.   plan for a fire emergency

Preparing for a Flood
Floods are among the most common and most costly of natural disasters. You can make certain changes or additions to your home to help prepare it for flooding. You can gather emergency supplies and store up food and water. Finally, by doing these things, you can make sure that you yourself are mentally ready—for either evacuation or making do on your own until waters recede.

Taking Precautions
A good first step is to get a feel for how great the flood risk is in your area. Your local district office of the US Army Corps of Engineers can most likely help you with this. Flood hazard maps and related data are also available on two informative Web sites, one provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov) and the other by Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (www.esri.com/hazards). To more accurately pin down your particular risk, it could be helpful to know the elevation of your property. For this, try checking your local phone listings for a department of buildings or something similar.

If you learn that there is a risk of flooding in your area, take the steps laid out in the rest of this section to get your home and yourself ready for that possibility. Whether or not you live in a flood risk area, this section is required reading. Take special note of the part about building a disaster kit. With some variation in the items included, such a kit will be needed for other emergency situations . . .