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To: City of Somerville

From: Nels Nelson  
Stantec's Urban Places

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**Reference: Somerville Flood Risk Communications Memo**

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS**

The following materials have been prepared to increase Somerville stakeholders' awareness of flood hazards and improve preparedness to flood risk. The intent of this memorandum is to describe how the materials should be used for flood risk communications.

The content of the "off-the-shelf" communication material is twelve infographics in Somerville's four languages; additional information for each infographic for posting on the associated website; and suggested text to be paired with the infographic image in social media posts. When distributed through social media or newsletters, the content is meant to both stand on its own to impart a message and drive the audience to the webpage, [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready), to get more information if relevant.

Suggested communication material deployment:

1. **Webpage:** Create a new webpage [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready) to present the infographics and provide additional information, including links to further resources
2. **Social media:**
  - o Post the content in a series on the City's Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts
  - o Repeat content in connection with news of disaster events in other regions as described in this memo
3. **Print media:**
  - o Publish the series of messages in a stand-alone brochure in Somerville's four languages
  - o Publish individual infographics within periodicals such as the newsletter
4. **Public meetings:** Individual infographics can be shared at the beginning of public meetings as a safety moment

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## INFOGRAPHICS:

### KNOW YOUR FLOOD RISK

#### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news
- Post in conjunction with news about climate change

#### Graphic text

To learn more about future flood risk in Somerville, visit [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready)

#### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

1.

Even if you've never been flooded in the past, climate change is bringing increased vulnerability. Your level of risk may be changing with a changing climate. Visit [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready) to learn more

2.

Understand the risk of flooding to your property and how to protect against it. Visit [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready) to learn more

#### Website text

View Somerville's flood risk maps [link]. With climate change, the risks of the past are not the risks of the future. We urge you to review the current and future flood risk maps to understand how your home, business, and nearby roads may be impacted.



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## MY FLOOD PLAN

### Deployment notes

- Post when severe weather is anticipated in the news regionally or nationally
- Post when there are natural disasters in the news

### Graphic text

- Have I signed up for City of Somerville alerts?
- Do I know which roads near me are likely to flood?
- Do I have an emergency supply kit and action plan?
- Will I need to move my belongings or car?

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

1.

Do you have a plan for what to do when there is a flood? Visit [somerillema.gov/floodready](http://somerillema.gov/floodready) to get more information.

2.

Emergencies can happen at any time. Does your family know how to get in touch with each other if you are not all together? Before an emergency happens, have a family discussion to determine who would be your out of state point of contact and where you would meet away from your home -- both in the neighborhood and within your town.

3.

Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes so it is important to plan in advance: how you will get to a safe place; how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations. To find out how, visit [somerillema.gov/floodready](http://somerillema.gov/floodready) #FloodSafety

### Website text

Visit the State's emergency preparedness website for making a Family Emergency Plan, Building an Emergency Kit, and Preparedness for Pets and Animals [<https://www.mass.gov/be-prepared-for-emergencies>].



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## DO'S AND DON'TS OF FLOOD INSURANCE

### Deployment notes

- Post when FEMA or other flood insurance items are in the news

### Graphic text

#### Do

- Understand your home/renter insurance policy coverage
- List and photograph belongings, including furniture, clothing, and valuables before a flood
- Compare different policies

#### Don't

- Assume insurance covers flooding. Most standard homeowners and renters' policies do not
- Assume flood insurance is only for FEMA zones

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

1.

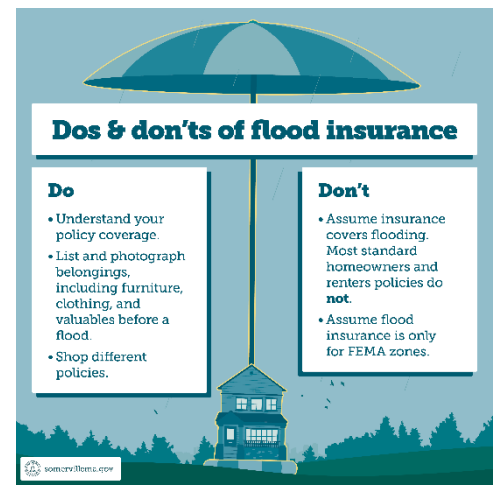
Flood insurance isn't just for FEMA zones. Understand your risk and make informed decisions about selecting the best policy for your situation. Visit [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready) to get more information.

2.

Just a few inches of water can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Most people, including renters, condo owners, and businesses, are eligible to purchase flood insurance. Visit [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready) to get more information.

### Website text

Flood damage is excluded under standard homeowners and renters insurance policies. However, flood coverage is available in the form of a separate policy both from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and from some private insurers. The NFIP's Preferred Risk Policy is very affordable. A premium for a primary residence may cost about \$500 a year for \$200,000 of coverage for a home structure and \$80,000 for contents. That is about \$40 a month. Contact your insurance company for more information about potential flood protection.



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## WHAT IS THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE DOING ABOUT FLOODING?

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with other content about what residents and businesses should be doing if there is a risk of pushback against the City for not doing their fair share

### Graphic text

- Climate Action
- System Maintenance
- Infrastructure Projects
- Community Outreach

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

The City is actively working to prevent flooding. Our activities range from investments in large-scale stormwater management infrastructure to routine maintenance of facilities.

### Website text

The City of Somerville has been working on flood mitigation solutions, maintenance of the stormwater management system, community outreach and preparedness, and climate action. [Somerville, include links to examples]



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## MY WET BASEMENT

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news

### Graphic text

You can protect your property with simple fixes.

- belongings on shelves or in sealed bins
- outlets at waist level
- washer & dryer on risers
- boiler on riser
- tile instead of carpet

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Prepare your basement for flooding. Find out more at [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready)

### Website text

If your basement is subject to flooding, consider wet floodproofing through installation of water-resistant finishing materials. This is practical only for non-living spaces, such as basements, crawlspaces, or garages.

What can I do to limit flood damage?

- Store your belongings off the floor on risers and shelves or in sealed bins
- Use flood resistant materials like tile and concrete
- Install a sump pump and backflow preventers
- Elevate electrical outlets to higher areas on the wall above the flood protection elevation, as there is a danger of not being unable to shut off the electrical panel before the basement floods
- Relocate utilities including the electrical service panel and the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) ductwork



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## DO I HAVE A BACKFLOW PREVENTER?

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news
- Post in conjunction with local flooding events

### Graphic text

Sink, shower, toilet, dishwasher, washing machine, or floor drain in your basement? You need to install a backflow preventer. Don't let the sewer flood your basement!

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Backflow preventers are not only great at keeping sewage from backing up into your basement, they are required! Check plumbing fixtures in your basement today, and find out more at [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready)

### Website text

Flooding on your street could cause sewers to back up through your pipes and flood your basement with sewage. Do you have a sink, shower, toilet, dishwasher, washing machine, or floor drain in your basement? Do you own a basement-level apartment or condo? If so, you may need a professional plumber to install a backflow preventer to prevent sewage from flowing backwards into your basement.



Reference: Somerville Flood Risk Communications Memo

## MY WET YARD

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news
- Post in conjunction with forecasts of moderate rainfall events in the region

### Graphic text

You can protect your property with simple fixes.

- Directing downspouts away
- Grading away from foundation
- Permeable pavers
- French drain
- Drywells

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Looks like rain! Check out these tips for keeping your yard and foundation dry. Learn more at [somervillema.gov/floodready](http://somervillema.gov/floodready)

### Website text

How does this house keep its yard and foundation dry?

- Downspouts and gutters are well maintained, extend away from the foundation, and discharge onto a splash pad
- The yard slopes away from the foundation
- French drains convey water away from the foundation
- Drywells store and infiltrate rainwater
- Permeable pavement infiltrates rainwater from driveways and patios
- Window well covers restrict water from entering basement windows





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## DON'T LOSE BUSINESS TO FLOODING

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news

### Graphic text

- Keep files online, offsite, or in waterproof/fireproof containers.
- Make a plan to protect materials and equipment that are vital to your business.
- Develop a business-continuity plan and share it with your employees.
- Consider commercial flood insurance to protect your business.

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Roughly 40 to 60 percent of small businesses never reopen their doors following a disaster. But you can. Learn more about protecting your business at [somerillema.gov/floodready](http://somerillema.gov/floodready)

### Website text

Following a disaster, 40% to 60% of small businesses never reopen their doors, and 90% fail within a year unless they can resume operations within 5 days. Read FEMA's Ready Business Mentoring Guide (PDF) [[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1392217307183-56ed30008abd809cac1a3027488a4c24/2014\\_business\\_user\\_guide.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1392217307183-56ed30008abd809cac1a3027488a4c24/2014_business_user_guide.pdf)]



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## TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news

### Graphic text

- 6 inches of water can knock an adult off their feet.
- 12 inches can sweep a car off the road.
- Stay where you are unless told to evacuate.
- Follow warnings about flooded roads.
- It's never safe to walk, drive, or bike into flood waters.

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

1.

Walking, biking, or driving into floodwaters could be the last decision you ever make. Turn Around, Don't Drown! #FloodSafety

2.

Don't underestimate the power of water. It only takes 6 inches of fast-moving water to knock over and carry away an adult walking or bicycling, and 12 inches to carry away a car. Turn Around, Don't Drown!

3.

NEVER drive, walk, or bike into floodwaters. It is impossible to know how deep the water is just by looking at it. Turn Around, Don't Drown! #FloodSafety

### Website text

- It is NEVER safe to walk, drive, or bike into flood waters
- 6 inches of moving water can knock an adult off their feet walking or bicycling
- 12 inches of water can sweep a car off the road
- Stay where you are unless told to evacuate
- Following warnings about flooded roads



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## STAY INFORMED AND CONNECTED

### Deployment notes

- Post in conjunction with flooding events in the news
- Post in conjunction with local floods

### Graphic text

- Don't miss out on important information. Sign up for alerts via phone, text, social media, or email.
- Check on family, friends, neighbors, and those who need extra help, especially the elderly.

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Subscribe to Somerville alerts to receive important information about flood hazards  
<https://www.somervillema.gov/page/alerts>

### Website text

Subscribe to Somerville alerts [<https://www.somervillema.gov/page/alerts>]. Check on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly and those who may need extra help.



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## AVOID POLLUTED FLOOD WATER

### Deployment notes

- Post during and/or after local flooding events

### Graphic text

- Floodwater may be contaminated by oil, raw sewage, chemicals, and dead animals
- Be cautious of electrocution risk

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Standing floodwater is dangerous. Stay out of it to avoid contaminants, electrocution, and other hazards.

### Website text

Avoid wading in floodwater, which contains dangerous debris and is contaminated. Be aware of the risk of electrocution -- underground or downed power lines can electrically charge the water.



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## SO I'VE BEEN FLOODED, NOW WHAT?

### Deployment notes

- Post after local flooding events

### Graphic text

- Take pictures of all damage and flood impacts.
- Dry and disinfect all areas and items quickly and thoroughly. Wear gloves, safety glasses, and face masks.
- Wash and dry clothing and other home items.
- Search for mold.
- If professional repairs are necessary, hire licensed and insured contractors.
- Keep receipts for all repairs.

### Suggested accompanying text for social media posts

Take action to prevent further damage and health concerns if your house or business has been flooded. Go to [somerillema.gov/floodready](http://somerillema.gov/floodready) to learn more

### Website text

Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Water and debris left from floodwater can contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals. Take precautions and wear appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, and face masks. Follow five basic steps for post-flood building restoration, including (1) air out, (2) move out, (3) tear out, (4) clean out, and (5) dry out. Seek out professional services and/or guidance before attempting to repair flood-damaged property.

Throw out any food, including canned items, that was not maintained at a proper temperature or has been exposed to floodwaters. Do not eat food from a flooded garden. When in doubt, throw it out.

Remove and replace any drywall or other paneling that has been underwater. Use a moisture meter to make sure that wooden studs and framing are dry before replacing the drywall. Mold growth, often in hidden places, is a significant health hazard.

Photograph damage to your property and contact your insurance agent. Do what you can to prevent further damage that insurance may not cover (e.g., putting a tarp on a damaged roof).



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