

# Action Plan

## Category 3. – Flood Proofing of Individual Homes and Facilities

### Action 3.2 – Making it Safe for Basement Dwelling in Case of Flood



## Overview and Implementation Strategy:

In September 2021, a year after the Sept 10, 2020, unnamed storm that was the impetus for this Task Force, the impact of Hurricane Ida reverberated through NY and NJ. Unlike the coastal damage from storms like Hurricane Sandy, Ida resulted in inland flooding similar to what the District experienced on September 10, 2020. The flooding that resulted from the remnants of hurricane Ida in the Northeast resulted in 43 documented fatalities in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. Many of these fatalities were due to drowning from being trapped in basement apartments. While the Sept 10, 2020, storm in the District did damage to individual properties, no drowning-related fatalities were attributed to this storm. Should this storm have had the rain potential of Hurricane Ida, the consequences for basement dwellings might have been similarly catastrophic.

This Action Plan recommends the establishment of requirements for landlords to advise their tenants of this same danger combined with a public education campaign from relevant District agencies. In addition to creating awareness, this Action Plan will evaluate early warning technology options like water level sensors interlinked to smart alerts, as well as individual home flood sensors to warn residents of impending flood conditions.

### Impacted City Ward/ANC:

- All areas of the City. Wards 7 and 8 have an additional risk posed by Watts Branch and Oxon Run Creek flooding

### Lead Agency for Implementation within DC Government:

- TBD

### Supporting Agencies, Roles/Commitments:

- DHCD
- DOEE
- DC Water
- DPW
- OTA
- DOB
- DDOT
- HSEMA
- DISB
- OCTO

## Background:

### Impact of this Effort on Task Force Goal:

- The effort is designed to raise awareness of owners, landlords, and tenants occupying basement dwellings to the dangers when a major rain event like a hurricane is anticipated over the District.

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#### Historical Context:

- While homes were flooded during the Sept 10, 2020, cloud burst, the storm was transient and did not have the sustained precipitation capacity like Hurricane Ida. However, the damage resulting from the Sept 10, 2020 storm was a preview of the damage potential had it lingered over the District like Hurricane Ida did in the Northeast.

There is no known instance of fatality within the District related to basement flooding. However, there were also no known instances of fatalities in Rockville, MD either when in the early morning of September 1, 2021 a flash storm resulted in the drowning of a basement resident and near drowning of several. Nor were risks known in advance when rain associated with Hurricane Ida resulted in the 43 fatalities in the northeast United States.

These two tragedies have flagged basement apartments as a drowning risk when the right circumstances converge.

#### Equity

##### How does this action assist vulnerable communities?

- Basements apartments are often the most affordable of rental spaces. Protection of residents who live in basement dwellings is primarily protection for the economically disadvantaged population in the District.

#### Timeline:

Fiscal Year	Responsible Agency	Action
2023 and beyond	DHCD,OTA, DOB	Mandate notification of basement renters of dangers during sales and execution of leases.
	DISB	Include education on dangers on basement inundation when conducting public education on Insurance Instruments
	HSEMA, DOEE, DC WATER, DDOT, OCTO	Include information on basement dwelling risks in communications with public. Ready DC is one opportunity. Pilot and implement sensor technologies and notification systems at vulnerable locations to provide advance warning of flooding

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## Budget:

**Total Estimated Cost:** Sensor Funding is covered in Action Plan 9.3  
\$80,000 annually for the Public Outreach and Education campaign

**Long Term Budget Requirements:** The required budget for the entire program will be built out based on results on the Pilot in Action Plan 9.3 and the feedback on the Public Outreach Campaign.