



805 St. Clair River Drive
Algonac, MI 48001
810.794.9361 | FAX 810.794.4804
www.cityofalgonac.org

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Using Sandbags for Flood Control in Algonac **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: WHAT IS A SANDBAG?

A: A sandbag is a sack made of burlap or woven polypropylene that is filled with sand or soil and used for flood control. Sandbags are a simple way to prevent or reduce flood water damage. Sandbags are basically for low-flow protection (up to two feet). Protection from high flow requires a permanent type of structure.

Q: WHEN CAN SANDBAGS BE USED?

A: Sandbags may be used as a barrier when the St. Clair River and/or Marine City Drain threatens to overflow and/or to divert moving water around, instead of through, your home. Sandbags are not water-tight but work satisfactorily in most situations.

Q: WHERE CAN I GET SANDBAGS?

A: Sandbags can be purchased on-line and from some hardware stores. Limited quantities may be available at the city. Be prepared to purchase and prepare your own sandbags.

Q: WHERE CAN SANDBAGS BE USED?

A: Sandbags should never be used to build a fortress around the perimeter of your property. They should be used to protect your home. You may need a pump to remove the floodwater that is trapped between your home and the sandbag wall.

Sandbags can also be placed over floor wastes and drains in your shower/bath, in front of doorways, doorwalls and brickwork vents.

Q: WHAT SIZE BAGS WORK BEST FOR PRIVATE RESIDENCES AND BUSINESSES?

A: Use bags about 14-18" wide and 30-36" deep. Do not use feed sacks - they are too large to handle.

Q: HOW MANY SANDBAGS DO I NEED?

A: It takes an average of 600 sandbags to cover a 100-foot section, 1-foot high. A half-full sandbag will weigh approximately 30 pounds. Thirty sandbags are equal to approximately ½ ton (one ton is 2000 pounds) and is the maximum legal load limit for a ½ ton truck.

Most standard homes on a concrete slab can be protected with less than 25 sandbags.

Q: HOW DO I FILL A SANDBAG?

A: Filling sandbags is a two-person operation. Bags should be filled between one-third (1/3) to one-half (1/2) of their capacity. A heavy bodied or sandy soil is most desirable for filling sandbags. Coarse sand could leak out through the weave, rocky soils are too porous, earth material deteriorates quickly.

Q: SHOULD THE SANDBAGS BE TIED OR UNTIED?

A: Untied sandbags are recommended for most situations so that it will lay flat when stacking. Tied sandbags should only be used when pre-filling and stockpiling may be required.

Q: HOW DO YOU STACK SANDBAGS?

- A:**
- 1) Fold top of sandbag down and rest bag on its folded top (preferably untied so it will lay flat).
 - 2) Stack bags tightly against one another with the folded top of the bag in the upstream or uphill direction to prevent the bags from opening when water runs by them.
 - 3) Tamp each sandbag into place, completing each layer prior to starting the next layer.
 - 4) Lay a plastic sheet (do not use garbage bags, as they are too slick to stack) in between the bags to control the flow and prevent seepage.
 - 5) Limit placement to three layers. Stagger the second and subsequent layer of bags, much like the pattern of bricks in a wall or a pyramid.

Q: HOW DO YOU DISPOSE OF SANDBAGS AFTER USE?

A: Homeowners should empty the material in the bags in their gardens or yards, then throw the bags in the trash. Use gloves, floodwaters may be contaminated.

Q: WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY HOME?

A: Raise valuables off the floor. Remove items from low cupboards. Turn off the electric and gas if you must evacuate.