Flooding and Displacement Resources

If your off-campus home has been affected by flooding or water damage, focus on safety first and notify your landlord or property manager right away. This page shares general guidance and connects you to Cal Poly and local support.

Start with your landlord or property manager

Your landlord or property manager should be the first point of contact for the condition of the rental and needed repairs. Report the issue by phone and in writing as soon as you can and save a copy of all messages.

- Explain what happened, when it began, which areas are affected, and whether utilities or safety are impacted.
- Take photos or videos when it is safe to do so. Save receipts, inspection notices, repair updates, and a copy of your lease.
    - Ask for a written plan: whether the unit is safe to occupy, the repair and remediation timeline, access arrangements, and what temporary housing, rent, and return-to-unit arrangements are being proposed.
- Allow reasonable access for assessment and repair work. During an emergency such as active flooding, a landlord may enter without the usual 24 hour written notice.
    - Do not agree to end your tenancy, turn over keys, stop paying rent, or make repair deductions from rent without first getting legal advice about your specific situation.

Message draft for your landlord/property manager:

Subject: Urgent flooding or water damage at [rental address]

Hello [landlord or property manager],

I am reporting flooding or water damage at [address] that began around [date and time]. The affected areas are [areas], and [brief safety or utility impacts]. I have attached photos or video.

Please confirm whether the unit is safe to occupy and provide the plan and timeline for inspection, repairs, and any needed remediation. If the unit cannot be occupied, please also let us know the proposed arrangements for temporary housing, access, rent, and returning to the unit.

Thank you,
[Name and phone number]

Tenant rights and important cautions

Safe and livable housing. California landlords generally must maintain rental homes in a safe and livable condition. Serious water intrusion, unsafe utilities, inadequate weatherproofing, and contamination concerns may be habitability issues. The cause and extent of the damage matter.

Rent and the lease. If a rental is destroyed in a disaster, California guidance states that rent is not owed, and the lease no longer applies. If a home is partially damaged and cannot be lived in, students may have options but should get legal advice before moving out or changing rent payments. If damage is minor and the home remains livable, rent may still be due while urgent repairs are required.

Belongings. A landlord is not automatically responsible for personal property loss from a disaster when the landlord did not cause the damage. Students with renters insurance should review their coverage and consider starting a claim promptly.

No self-help eviction. A landlord cannot simply lock a tenant out or remove belongings. A tenant who receives an eviction notice, feels pressured to leave, or believes a landlord is retaliating for a repair request should seek legal help.

If you need help right now

Immediate danger	Call 911. Leave the area if there is a risk from standing water near electricity, structural damage, or other immediate safety hazards.
A place to stay	For emergency housing assistance and other support, visit the Cal Poly CARE page or contact the Office of the Dean of Students.
Community support	Dial 211 for free, confidential referrals to local shelter, food, housing, and other community resources, available 24 hours a day.

Cal Poly Support & Resources:

For individualized off-campus housing support, email offcampushousing@calpoly.edu. For immediate student support, the Office of the Dean of Students can be reached at deanofstudents@calpoly.edu.

- Cal Poly Cares Emergency Grant
  - Cal Poly Basic Needs Housing Support
  - Cal Poly Off Campus Housing Program

Tenant Legal Information & Local Help:

- SLO Legal Assistance Foundation landlord tenant, habitability, and eviction issues