

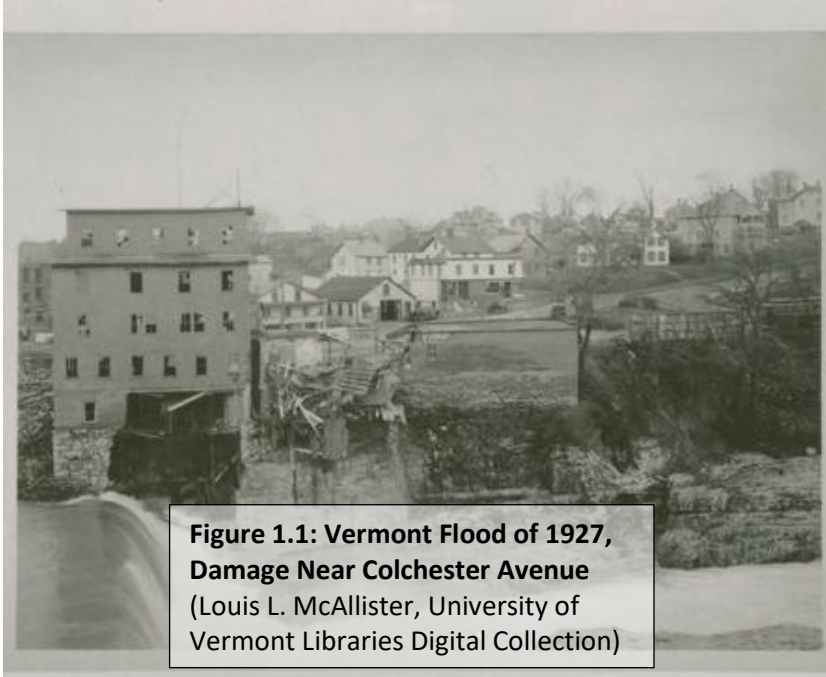
Find this online: [floodready.vermont.gov/info](http://floodready.vermont.gov/info)

# Safety for Friends, Family, and Neighbors

*Make sure your community is on the right track by considering how to promote flood safety for ALL.*

**Environmental Justice** is a term that describes the need to create communities that prioritize the well-being of all without disproportionately exposing anyone (based on national origin, income, etc.) to environmental hazards such as pollution or natural disasters.

**Social Vulnerability** is a term used to characterize factors such as poverty or difficulty accessing transportation that “may weaken a community’s ability to prevent human suffering and financial loss in a disaster” (“CDC/ASTDR Social Vulnerability Index”).



**Figure 1.1: Vermont Flood of 1927, Damage Near Colchester Avenue**  
(Louis L. McAllister, University of Vermont Libraries Digital Collection)

## Natural hazards such as flooding do not impact all people equally.



**Persons With No Prior Knowledge of How to Determine a Property’s Flood Risk**



**People With Limited English Proficiency**



**Residents Who Live in Rental Units**



**Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)**



**Persons Living in Manufactured Homes**



**Residents on Fixed-Incomes/Earning a Lower-Income**

Each of the groups above may face disproportionate risks due to flooding, as well as many other groups that are not listed. For a more comprehensive explanation of why these groups may be more vulnerable to flooding visit [INSERT LINK TO FLOODREADY EJ PAGE]

[dec.vermont.gov/watershed/rivers](http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/rivers)  
[www.floodready.vt.gov](http://www.floodready.vt.gov)



No Adverse Impact (NAI):

The actions of one property owner should not adversely impact the rights of other property owners.



Figure 2.1: Tropical Storm Irene, Route 12 Damage (Berlin, VT)  
(Toby Talbot, National Public Radio)

### Adopt No Adverse Impact (NAI) Development Standards:

- **Create a community where flood safety is the priority.**
- According to FEMA, “The philosophy of no adverse impact (NAI) encourages individuals and communities to avoid development that would cause flooding of neighbors or neighboring communities. **Be a good neighbor.**”
- Minimize the impact of flooding by decreasing flood damages in your community and **increasing safety for all.**

## Why Care?

- 1. Environmental justice is an issue of safety.**  
Making sure that all people have adequate protection from flood hazards regardless of race, income, etc. is the bare minimum. Keeping your community safe should be a priority.
- 2. Seeking creative solutions encourages growth.**  
Flood equity is a complex issue that requires persistence and innovation to achieve growth at the community level. Does your community clearly acknowledge and address the need for equitable floodplain management and inclusive policies?
- 3. Flood events are predicted to become more frequent in the coming years.**  
What is your community doing to address this increased risk? Who in your community may be particularly vulnerable to the increased occurrence of natural hazards?
- 4. Planning with the future in mind is the right thing to do.**  
How does your community address the potential impacts of new development on other community members? Will certain groups be at higher risk of flood hazards as a result of new development?

***Safe Communities are Strong Communities.***

To learn more, check out:

- Link to EJ page on FloodReady <https://floodready.vermont.gov/safe>
- ASFPM’s [No Adverse Impact Floodplain Management](#) webpage
- Stephen DeBerry’s TEDTalk: [Why the “wrong side of the tracks” is usually the east side of cities](#)

#### References

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. *CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index.* <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>