

Protecting Your Home with Sandbags

Although every situation is different, sandbags are an easy and effective way to divert water around instead of through buildings. There are basic steps to follow on how to fill and place sandbags correctly to best protect buildings and other structures from flooding.

In the past, close-weave burlap sacks were the most common sandbags used. Today most are made of plastic and available at many locations across the county. Empty bags can be stored for several years under the right conditions but filled bags deteriorate quickly. After using one rainy season, you can empty the sand into your yard/garden and save the bags for next year.

Sand makes the most desirable fill but even a heavy bodied soil may be used. Gravel/rocky soil is poor choice/least desirable due to permeability. Usable material at or near the site has definite advantages because of weight and transportation issues.

Supplies Needed:

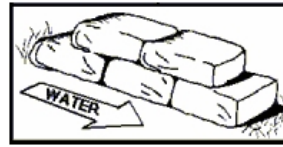
Cord/ties	Plastic	Shovel
Sandbags	Sand	Wheelbarrow

How to Fill a Sandbag

- Work in pairs, one holding the bag while the other shovels in the fill material.
- Place the first shovel of fill on the lip of the bag to help hold the bag open. Continue to fill, avoiding any extra movements that will make you tire out sooner.
- Only fill bag $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ full which will weigh approximately 40 pounds or less. Most people can carry or drag a bag that weight, but a full bag of wet sand or soil will be too heavy.
- Once filled, fold over the empty top of bag in a triangle or tie off high. Leaving room at the top of the bag will make it easier to pack the bags into layers.

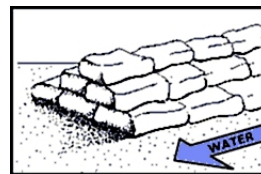
Placing Sandbags

- Remove any debris from the area where sandbags are to be placed.



- Place the filled bags lengthwise/parallel to the direction of the flow of water with flap also in direction of flow.

- If tied bags are used, flatten them and flare the tied end. If untied bags are used, fold the open end to form a triangle. Leakage of one bag can reduce effectiveness of whole pile.
- Place the succeeding bags on the flared/folded portion of the previous bag and stomp/mold into place, eliminating gaps to form a tighter seal/more leak-proof barrier.
- If a second layer is necessary, stagger the joint connections. Do not leave any spaces between.



- Limit placement to three layers unless a building is used as a backing or if you have laid the bags in a pyramid — three rows on the bottom, two rows on the next, and one row on top, etc.

To protect a sliding glass door, lay a sheet of plastic across the bottom of door/ground, extending up the wall at least one foot higher than predicted water level and past the width. Pile the sandbags on the sheet by the bottom of the door and extend past the width of door. Also make sure that door sills, garage entries, etc. are lined with sandbags.

Stack them directly against the house whenever possible.

