

Know the flood history for your area. Buildings in X zones are at risk of flooding.

In Louisiana, six specific types of flooding are of main concern: riverine, flash, ponding, backwater, urban, and coastal.

- Riverine flooding occurs along a river or smaller stream. It is the result of runoff from heavy rainfall or intensive snow or ice melt. The speed with which riverine flood levels rise and fall depends not only on the amount of rainfall, but even more on the capacity of the river itself, as well as the shape and land cover of its drainage basin. The smaller the river, the faster that water levels rise and fall. Thus, the Mississippi River levels rise and fall slowly due to its large capacity. Generally, elongated and intensely developed drainage basins will reach faster peak discharges and faster falls than circular-shaped and forested basins of the same area.
- Flash flooding occurs when locally intense precipitation inundates an area in a short amount of time, resulting in local stream flow and drainage capacity being overwhelmed
- Ponding occurs when concave areas (e.g., parking lots, roads, and clay-lined natural low areas) collect water and are unable to drain.
- Backwater flooding occurs when water slowly rises from a normally unexpected direction where protection has not been provided. A model example is the flooding that occurred in LaPlace during Hurricane Isaac in 2012. Although the town was protected by a levee on the side facing the Mississippi River, floodwaters from Lake Maurepas and Lake Pontchartrain crept into the community on the side of town opposite the Mississippi River.
- Urban flooding is similar to flash flooding but is specific to urbanized areas. It takes place when storm water drainage systems cannot keep pace with heavy precipitation, and water accumulates on the surface. Most urban flooding is caused by slow-moving thunderstorms or torrential rainfall.
- Coastal flooding can appear similar to any of the other flood types, depending on its cause. It occurs when normally dry coastal land is flooded by seawater but may be caused by direct inundation (when the sea level exceeds the elevation of the land), overtopping of a natural or artificial barrier, or the breaching of a natural or artificial barrier (i.e., when the barrier is broken down by the sea water). Coastal flooding is typically caused by storm surge, tsunamis, or gradual sea level rise.

Historically, in St. John the Baptist Parish, all types of flooding events have historically been observed.