

No. 009/2024

8 January 2024

Our Ref: E4/24

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Flooding - Advice to Health & Safety Representatives & Branches – ‘What to do and How to Stay Safe in a Flood and after a Flood’

Further to previously circulated LTBs and guidance issued to Branches and Regions the Health, Safety & Environment Department is issuing the following advice for Health and Safety Representatives in flood affected areas following the latest round of warnings and alerts issued by the Met Office and government agencies.

Flood forecast for the next 5 days:

Flooding impacts are expected to continue along parts of the River Trent, River Severn and River Thames for the next five days. The Government and Met Office warn that properties will flood and there will be travel disruption. River flooding impacts are also possible across parts of Yorkshire and Humber and possible but not expected tomorrow, as river levels remain high after the prolonged and recent heavy rainfall and wet weather. Local groundwater flooding is possible in parts of the South of England, Yorkshire and the Humber throughout the next five days. Land, roads and some properties could flood and there could be travel disruption. The Environment Agency has circa 266 Flood Warnings in place as of Saturday 6 Jan 2024, where flooding is expected and 163 Flood Alerts where flooding is possible. This number changes by the hour with warnings and alerts either added or removed and therefore should be monitored in the high risk areas. The flood warning websites for the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are below and provide ‘flood maps’ and the UK national floodline number is also below. Branch Safety Reps should keep a check of flooding in their areas.

To Check Flooding Near You go to:- <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/find-location>

Latest river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels:

There are around 3,500 measuring stations and most are along main rivers and the coast. These levels can help you understand your flood risk now and over the next few days.

To find the situation with a River, Sea, Groundwater or Rainfall Level near you go to:- <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>

Warning of flooded properties and transport disruption as river levels rise:

More than 1,800 properties have already been hit because of saturated ground, the Environment Agency has reported and more properties will flood over the next five days amid

increased river levels and rainfall, the Environment Agency (EA) has warned with the impact of high water levels likely to continue over the coming days, particularly around the rivers Trent, Severn and Thames. It also says that transport services and roads are likely to continue to be disrupted alongside disruption to power supplies and other supplies.

Long range weather forecast for the UK:

The long range weather forecast for the UK from the Met Office is that colder conditions are on the way. The impactful rain and showers which have been a feature of the new year's weather will eventually ease with many regions becoming drier and colder in coming weeks, marking a change in weather with a move to a colder and thankfully drier and more settled period for most areas.

In the meantime and until flooding eases and flood water recedes, the following advice and guidance has been compiled in conjunction with the Government's Environment Agency (who have issued further flood warnings across many parts of Britain) and the UK Fire and Rescue Service (in respect of what to do prior to re-occupation of their premises after flood and storm damage):

Flood Safety Advice – IMPORTANT:

Before and during Floods - the Workplace - Commercial Premises and Vehicles:

- Be pro-active if you are in a flood affected area or one in which a 'Flood Warning' has been issued and be prepared. The better prepared you are, the better you'll cope with the effects of flooding. Don't underestimate the damage a flood can do and don't wait for floods to happen. Flooding can occur very quickly and if you aren't prepared now, you may not have time to get ready once the flooding starts.
- Listen out for local news reports, updates and warnings on radio and TV.
- Check weather reports for your area.
- Bear in mind the areas where the Environment Agency has issued 'Severe Flood Warnings' or 'Flood Warnings' (See Flood Warning Codes below).
- Ensure that the Environment Agency, Local Authority and Emergency Services advice is followed by members.
- Phone the Environment Agency's Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for more information.
- Remain aware of the Environment Agency's 'Flooding updates' (see below) and identify high risk areas and safety concerns.
- Try to work jointly with local management. Initiate discussions with the management Person In Control regarding the employer's 'Major Incident Plan' ensuring it's fit for purpose and that as a CWU Safety Rep, you are consulted and involved in the decision making process in line with your entitlement under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations.
- Jointly with local management liaise with emergency 'Blue-Light' Services and local authorities as the workplace may be evacuated in the event of a flood.
- Ensure members are jointly briefed and receive sufficient information and instructions.
- Be ready to turn off gas and electricity (get help if needed). Unplug electrical items and move them upstairs if possible.
- If floods occur then the bottom line is that under no circumstances should members' safety be jeopardised. Advise members that floods can kill and that they should remember that several people have lost their lives during past UK floods.
- Stay out of flood waters they are unsafe! Advise members not to try to walk, wade or swim through floodwater - if on foot you can easily lose your footing and six inches of fast flowing water can knock a person over. Manhole covers may have come off in flood water and there may be other hazards you can't see beneath the floodwater surface. People should also never try to swim through fast flowing water - they may get swept away or be struck by an object in the water.

- Members should never try to drive through floodwater - two feet of water will float a car or van away – even if you are in a large goods vehicle it can still be swept away. Avoid contact with floodwater - it may be contaminated with sewage.
- Once flooding occurs, don't travel unless you have to.

After the Floods - Flood Recovery Information - Workplaces and Commercial Premises:

- Prior to re-occupation of the workplace premises that have been flooded ensure they are jointly inspected. A risk assessment must be undertaken to ensure the safety of all employees in the workplace.
- The premises will need to be dried out and thoroughly cleaned up. Flood waters damage materials, leave mud, silt, contamination from sewage, other unknown contaminants and promote the growth of mildew. The walls, floors, shelves, contents and any other flooded parts of the building should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and made safe in all respects to reduce these hazards and the damage they cause.
- If the premises have been flooded or water damaged, the electrical and gas installations should be checked by a competent person prior to reconnection;
- Any electrical plant, machinery equipment which has been affected should not be used unless checked and verified safe by a competent person;
- If the heating system for the premises is affected it should be checked by a competent person before being brought back into use;
- If portable temporary heaters, space heaters etc. are to be used to heat and dry out the premises, ensure that they are positioned in well ventilated areas away from combustible materials and positioned as to not endanger staff;
- The premises fire safety systems such as fire alarms, sprinklers or emergency lighting systems etc. should be checked and tested by a competent engineer prior to the occupation of the premises;
- Any hazardous materials or substances on the premises which have been affected by water, should be quarantined and specialist advice obtained prior to disposal;
- Ensure that premises security has not been compromised;
- Damaged goods and equipment etc. should be removed and stored away from any building in a secure place or in a secured skip;
- Check all fire exits and escape routes to ensure that they can be used prior to occupation;
- If the premises have structural damage which may be a danger as a result of flooding or storm damage, the Local Authority should be contacted prior to occupation.
- If you have any fire safety concerns, contact the local Fire Safety Department.
- If you have any unresolved health and safety concerns, contact the local authority Environmental Health Department or HSE depending on the appropriate enforcing authority.

Before and during Floods - in the home members should:

- Members should be made aware that there are 1.5 million properties at risk of flooding in England and Wales. One of them could be theirs!
- Do what you can now to prepare for a flood. Don't wait for the flood to happen. Floods can occur very quickly. If you aren't prepared now, you may not have time to get ready once the flooding starts. The better prepared you are, the better you'll cope with the effects of flooding.
- Don't underestimate the damage a flood can do - Check you have adequate flood cover on your home insurance. A recent Association of British Insurers (ABI) survey found that more than a quarter of UK people did not have sufficient home insurance cover to mitigate against losses caused by flooding!

- Don't assume everyone knows what to do. Make a family flood plan and practice it. Do any neighbours need any help during a flood? - get organised.
- Listen to local Radio and TV for announcements. Check with Floodline on 0345 988 1188 whether there are specific flood warning arrangements for your area. Keep watching and listening. Stay alert; events can change very quickly during a flood. Keep an eye on the weather and listen out for warnings on the radio and TV.
- Keep a list of useful phone numbers somewhere you'll remember, e.g. your local council, the emergency services, your insurance company and the Environment Agency's Floodline number 0345 988 1188.
- Make a flood kit. Keep a torch, batteries, radio, and necessary medication, emergency numbers, rubber gloves and your insurance policy in a safe place, upstairs if possible.
- Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other items to safety. Move upstairs onto higher ground.
- Know how and where to turn off your gas and electricity supplies. If you're not sure, check with the gas and electricity companies. Mark the tap or switch with a sticker to help you remember.
- Get some sandbags (to block doors and airbricks but remember to ensure that there is adequate ventilation). Put sandbags or flood boards in place - but make sure your property is ventilated. Plug sinks/baths and put a sandbag in the toilet bowl to prevent backflow. Check in Yellow Pages under builder's merchants for local suppliers or ask your local authority for advice. You can also make them yourself using old pillow cases or carrier bags and fill them with sand or earth.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. Doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder, especially if the electricity fails.
- If the flooding is serious the emergency services and your local authority may decide to evacuate you. Do exactly what they tell you. Remember to take supplies such as medication with you; you may be way from your home for a while.
- Don't drive through floodwater, your car may be swept away. Don't walk in floodwater, it can easily knock you off your feet. The water could have open manholes, road works or objects and you won't be able to see them.
- Don't walk on sea defences, riverbanks or cross river bridges if possible - they may collapse in extreme situations or you may be swept off by large waves. Beware of stones and pebbles being thrown up by waves.
- Members should check on elderly relatives and neighbours to see if they are ok.

After the Floods - in the Home members should be advised:

- Protect yourself and your family from stress, fatigue and health hazards that follow a flood.
- Once it's safe to go back in, protect your home and contents from further damage.
- Some things are not worth repairing and some things may be too complicated or expensive to do by yourself - make the most of your time and money.
- Dry out your home - Flood waters damage materials, leave mud, silt and unknown contaminants and promote the growth of mildew. You need to dry your home to reduce these hazards and the damage they cause.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the home. It takes a brick about a month to dry out, so take care to ensure your house is secure. Remember to unblock airbricks and doorways.
- Do watch out for any broken glass or nails while you're cleaning up.
- Wash taps and run them for a few minutes before use. Main tap water should not be contaminated but check with your local water company if you're concerned.
- Clean up - The walls, floors, shelves, contents and any flooded parts of your home should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

- Don't touch items that have been in contact with the water. Flood water is likely to be contaminated and could contain sewage. Disinfect and clean thoroughly everything that is wet.
- If the premises have been flooded, don't turn any electrical items back on. Any domestic appliances or equipment i.e., cookers, televisions, VCR's, washing machines etc. which have been affected by water should not be used. Make sure they've dried out first. The electrical/gas installations should be checked by a competent person prior to reconnection. Contact the gas, electricity and water companies to get supplies checked before you turn them back on.
- Heating systems i.e., gas boilers, oil boilers, storage heaters etc. which have been affected by water should not be used unless checked by a competent person;
- Be vigilant where damaged household contents are left outside the property, including damaged vehicles which may be subject to theft or arson.
- If your premises are unoccupied, make sure that they are secure;
- If you are re-occupying the premises, ensure that your smoke alarms are working to ensure your safety;
- If you are using portable heaters take appropriate precautions in the use and siting of these appliances and to ensure the safety of your family. Portable heaters using gas, oil or paraffin etc. should have adequate ventilation.
- If your premises has structural damage which may be a result of flooding or storm damage, you should contact the local authority prior to occupation.
- Prepare for the next flood - Protect yourself from the next flood - As mentioned above, make a family flood plan to avoid or minimise further damage. Don't think it can't happen again. Restock your supplies.
- Report the matter to your insurance company promptly - They'll need to get moving quickly.
- Check the internet under 'flood damage' for suppliers of cleaning materials or equipment to dry out your property.
- Don't trust bogus traders. With so much damage to repair, it's tempting to take the first offer that comes along. Always check references and, if possible, get recommendations.

Flood Warning Codes:

The flood warning code system consists of the following:

- **Flood Alert** - Flooding is possible. Be prepared.
- **Flood Warning** - Flooding of homes and businesses is expected. Immediate action is required. Act now!
- **Severe Flood Warning** - Severe flooding is expected with danger to life and property. Act now!
- **All Clear/Warning No Longer in Force** - No further flooding is expected for this area.

Flood Warning update information:

To access the up to date information, check the status of your area and to see the flood warnings currently in force in your region, go to the following 'Flooding Update Websites' at the following websites of government agencies who constantly monitor rainfall, river levels and sea conditions to forecast the possibility of flooding. Flood Alerts, Warnings and Severe Warning Lists are constantly updated. The Links are as follows:

- [England - Environment Agency \(EA\) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)

- [Scotland - Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)
- [Wales - Natural Resources Wales \(NRW\)](#)
- Northern Ireland – NI Direct <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/check-risk-flooding-your-area>

Further Flood Warning Websites:

- Met Office Flood warnings guide Website: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/flood-warnings>
- BBC Flood Warnings - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/warnings/floods>
- Gov.UK Flood Alerts and Warning Website - <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings>

UK National Floodline – 0345 988 1188

Attachments:

- Environment Agency Guide - Preparing for a flood
- Environment Agency Guide - During a Flood
- Environment Agency Guide - After a Flood

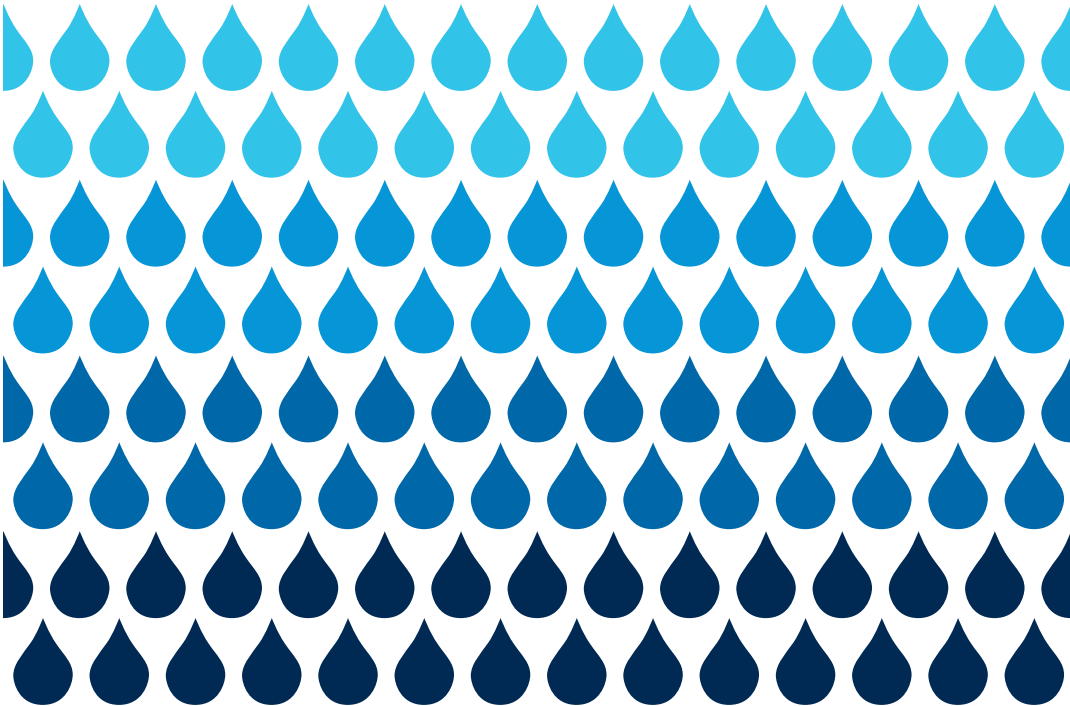
Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

Preparing for a flood

Practical advice on what to do to
protect you and your property



We are the Environment Agency.

It's our job to make people aware of flooding from rivers and the sea, provide flood warning services and build and maintain flood defences.

This leaflet contains useful information to help you reduce the effects of flooding on you and your property.

Published by:

Environment Agency
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Waterside Drive, Aztec West
Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD

Tel: 08708 506 506**

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www.environment-agency.gov.uk

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November 2007

**BT calls cost up to 8p/min plus 6p set-up fee from your home. Other providers and mobiles may vary.

Your flood warning service

Get the service that's right for you

We offer a different flood warning service depending on where you live.

Find out if you can sign up to our free 24 hour **Floodline Warnings Direct** service. You can select to receive warnings by phone, text, email, fax or pager.

In some areas we also give flood warnings using:

- Sirens – usually a wailing sound only activated when a flood is about to happen.
- Loud hailers – a vehicle will drive around repeating the flood warnings.

Other places to get the latest flood update

- www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood
- Teletext Page 159, BBC Ceefax Page 419 and Digital Ceefax Page 405.
- Local weather, news and travel bulletins.



call Floodline on
0845 988 1188*

Open 24 hours a day

- Find out what flood warning service is available where you live.
- Get practical advice on what to do before, during and after flooding.
- Get your Quickdial number for easy access to local warnings.

*BT calls cost up to 4p/min plus 6p set-up fee from your home. Other providers and mobiles may vary.

your flood plan

Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water mains supplies



Start preparing today before a flood happens. Use this checklist as your flood plan.

1. Check your insurance cover

- Check your buildings and contents insurance policy.
- Confirm you are covered for flooding.
- Find out if the policy replaces new for old, and if it has a limit on repairs.
- Don't underestimate the value of your contents.

2. Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water mains supplies

- Ask your supplier how to do this.
- Mark taps or switches with stickers to help you remember.

3. Prepare a flood kit of essential items (please tick)

- Copies of your home insurance documents.
- A torch with spare batteries.
- A wind-up or battery radio.
- Warm, waterproof clothing and blankets.
- A first aid kit and prescription medication.
- Bottled water and non-perishable foods.
- Baby food and baby care items.
- This leaflet including your list of important contact numbers.
- Keep your flood kit handy.

4. Know who to contact and how

- Agree where you will go and how to contact each other.
- Check with your council if pets are allowed at evacuation centres.
- Keep a list with all your important contacts to hand.

5. Think about what you can move now

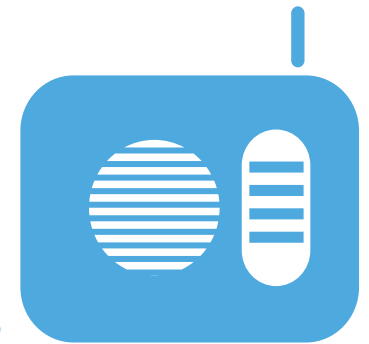
- Don't wait for a flood. Move items of personal value such as photo albums, family videos and treasured mementos to a safe place.

6. Think about what you would want to move to safety during a flood

- Outdoor pets
- Cars
- Furniture
- Electrical equipment
- Garden pot plants and furniture
- What else?
-

know your flood warning codes

Monitor local news and weather forecasts



Four codes are used for flood warnings. They can be issued in any order, usually ending with an 'all clear'.



What it means

Flooding of low lying land and roads is expected. Be aware, be prepared, watch out.

What to do

- Monitor local news and weather forecasts.
- Be aware of water levels near you.
- Be prepared to act on your flood plan.
- Check on the safety of pets and livestock.
- Charge your mobile phone.



What it means

Flooding of homes & businesses is expected. Act now!

What to do

- Move cars, pets, food, valuables and important documents to safety.
- Get flood protection equipment in place.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.
- Be prepared to evacuate your home.
- Protect yourself, your family and help others.
- Act on your flood plan.



What it means

Severe flooding is expected. There is extreme danger to life and property. Act now!

What to do

- Collect things you need for evacuation.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.
- Stay in a high place with a means of escape.
- Avoid electricity sources.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood water.
- In danger call 999 immediately.
- Listen to emergency services.
- Act on your flood plan.



What it means

Flood watches or warnings are no longer in force for this area.

What to do

- Keep listening to weather reports.
- Only return to evacuated buildings if you are told it is safe.
- Beware sharp objects and pollution in flood water.
- If your property or belongings are damaged, contact your insurance company. Ask their advice before starting to clean up.

Flood protection equipment can help stop flood water. Follow manufacturer instructions to put these in place when you get a flood warning.

Plastic covers to seal airbricks

These can stop flood water coming in through your airbricks.

Sandbags

Your local council may provide these during a flood, but they may be scarce. You can buy your own sand and bags, or fill pillowcases and plastic bags with earth. Be aware that following a flood they will be contaminated by sewage in the water.

Floodboards

These fix to frames around windows and doors. They can be washed, stored and used again.

Always remove flood protection equipment once the flood water has gone. This will help your property dry out.

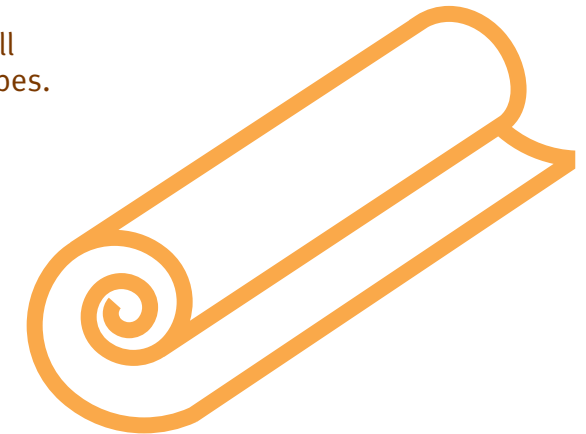
Further steps to protect your property

There are things you can do to your property that will make it easier and cheaper to clean up after a flood. However, these are likely to cost more to put in place and take longer to do.

- Lay ceramic tiles on your ground floor and use rugs instead of fitted carpets.
- Raise the height of electrical sockets to 1.5 metres above ground floor level.
- Use lime plaster instead of gypsum on walls.

- Fit stainless steel or plastic kitchens instead of chipboard ones.
- Position any main parts of a heating or ventilation system, like a boiler, upstairs.
- Fit non-return valves to all drains and water inlet pipes.
- Replace wooden window frames and doors with synthetic ones.

Lay rugs instead of fitted carpets on your ground floor



temporary flood protection equipment

useful numbers

**Your important flood telephone numbers.
Fill this out and keep this leaflet with your flood kit.**

Environment Agency Floodline	0845 988 1188*
Quickdial number	
Local authority emergency helpline	
Insurance company 24-hour number and policy number	
Local radio station frequency for news alerts and weather updates	
Family and neighbours	
Bank phone number and details	
Work phone numbers	
Doctor's surgery	
Local police station	
Vet/kennel/cattery	
Local hotel or B&B	
Gas supplier and meter number	
Electricity supplier and meter number	
Water supplier and meter number	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Builder	

*BT calls cost up to 4p/min plus 6p set-up fee from your home. Other providers and mobiles may vary.

For more information

These organisations have advice, information and services to help you protect your property from flooding.

For general insurance queries contact
The Association of British Insurers

 www.abi.org.uk

 020 7600 3333

For flood products and services contact

National Flood Forum (Blue Pages)

 www.floodforum.org.uk

 01299 403055

The Construction Centre

 www.theconstructioncentre.co.uk

 01926 865825

For information on flood resistance and resilience contact

CIRIA  www.ciria.org/flooding

 020 7549 3300

For support and advice contact

The British Damage Management Association (BDMA)

 www.bdma.org.uk

 07000 843 2362

For health information contact

Health Protection Agency

 www.hpa.org.uk

 01235 822 603/742

For weather and travel information contact

Met Office  www.metoffice.gov.uk

 0870 900 0100

Highways Agency

 www.highways.gov.uk

 0845 750 4030

Traffic Wales

 www.traffic-wales.com

 0845 6026020


call Floodline on
0845 988 1188*

Open 24 hours a day

- Find out what flood warning service is available where you live.
- Get practical advice on what to do before, during and after flooding.
- Get your Quickdial number for easy access to local warnings.

Would you like to find out more about us,
or about the environment?

Then call us on
08708 506 506** (Mon-Fri 8-6)

email
enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

or visit our website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)
floodline 0845 988 1188*

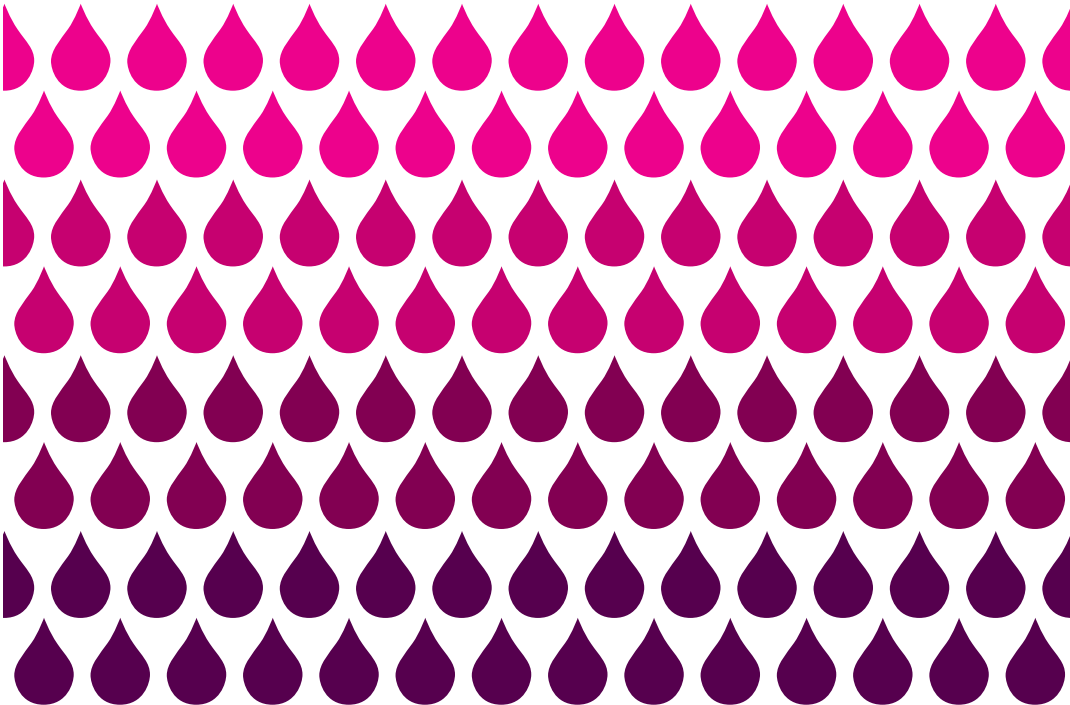
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- ** BT calls cost up to 8p/min plus 6p set-up fee from your home.
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During a flood

Practical advice on what to do
to stay safe in a flood



We are the Environment Agency.

It's our job to make people aware of flooding from rivers and the sea, provide flood warning services and build and maintain flood defences.

This leaflet tells you what you can do to stay safe during a flood and help protect your property.

Published by:

Environment Agency
Rio House
Waterside Drive, Aztec West
Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD

Tel: 08708 506 506**

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

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In the event of a flood

Focus on the safety of you and your family

- Put people before property.
- Cooperate with the emergency services if they tell you to evacuate during flooding.
- Be prepared to act quickly to get yourself to safety.

We use our flood warning service to warn you of flooding from rivers and the sea as soon as we can. But there is some flooding we can't predict.

Stay alert to localised flooding

Also known as 'surface water' flooding. This usually happens where drainage systems are unable to cope with heavy spells of rainfall. Rainwater is unable to drain away and quickly builds up, causing flooding in unexpected places. We cannot warn you of this type of flooding.



call Floodline on
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Open 24 hours a day

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- Get practical advice on what to do before, during and after flooding.
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Sign up to free 24 hour flood warnings today

what to do in an emergency

Listen to and act on the advice of the emergency services. Follow these simple steps to stay safe.

1. Gather essential items together either upstairs or in a high place.
2. Fill jugs and saucepans with clean water.
3. Move your family and pets upstairs, or to a high place with a means of escape.
4. Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies when flood water is about to enter your home if safe to do so. DO NOT touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water.
5. Keep listening to local radio for updates or call Floodline 0845 988 1188*.
6. Flood water can rise quickly, stay calm and reassure those around you. Call 999 if you are in danger.

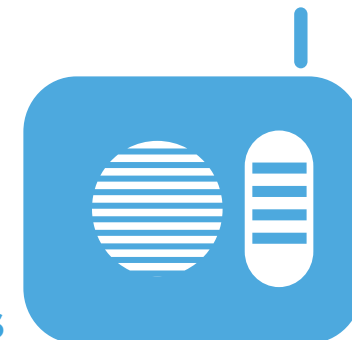
Important! Flood water is dangerous

- Avoid walking or driving through it.
- Keep children and vulnerable people away from it.
- Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch it.

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know your flood warning codes

Monitor local news and weather forecasts



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- Be prepared to act on your flood plan.
- Check on the safety of pets and livestock.
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What it means

Flooding of homes & businesses is expected. Act now!

What to do

- Move cars, pets, food, valuables and important documents to safety.
- Get flood protection equipment in place.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.
- Be prepared to evacuate your home.
- Protect yourself, your family and help others.
- Act on your flood plan.



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- Only return to evacuated buildings if you are told it is safe.
- Beware sharp objects and pollution in flood water.
- If your property or belongings are damaged, contact your insurance company. Ask their advice before starting to clean up.

protect what you can...

Move important items to safety and put flood protection equipment in place when there is a flood warning. Follow manufacturer instructions carefully to help stop the flood water.

Take items upstairs or to a high point in your property

- Safely store important documents such as insurance papers.
- Move items of personal value such as photos, family videos or treasured mementos.
- Move lightweight household belongings you can pick up easily and quickly.
- Move items of furniture that are expensive or harder to repair before cheaper ones.

If possible, move your outside belongings to higher ground

- If the flood water hasn't reached you, move your car to higher ground and move outdoor pets to safety.

Help stop water entering your home

- Put plugs in sinks and baths. Weigh them down with a sandbag, a pillowcase or plastic bag filled with garden soil, or a heavy object.

If you do not have non-return valves fitted

- Plug water inlet pipes with towels or cloths.
- Disconnect any equipment that uses water (like washing machines and dishwashers).

...but evacuate when told

Stay safe, always listen to the advice of the emergency services and evacuate when told to do so.

- Leave your home if the emergency services say so. Refusing to leave on their advice will put you, your family and those trying to help you at risk.
- When you are evacuated you will be taken to an evacuation centre run by your local council. Free food and bedding is provided. Bring spare clothing, essential medication and baby care items if you have an infant.
- Most evacuation centres will let you bring your pets. Take their food. Put cats and small animals in a pet carrier or secure box.
- People running the centres are trained to give you support and advice. They will help you through the stress of a flood and prepare you for what to do afterwards.

Listen to the advice of the emergency services



your flood plan

You need to act quickly when you get a flood warning. Use this list to help you.

1. Gather your flood kit of essential items

- Copies of your insurance documents.
- A torch with batteries.
- A wind-up or battery radio.
- Warm, waterproof clothing and blankets.
- A first aid kit and prescription medication.
- Bottled water and non-perishable foods.
- Baby food and baby care items.
- This leaflet including your list of important numbers.

2. Know who to contact and how

Agree where you will go and how to stay in contact. Plan for your pets too.

3. Turn off your gas, water and electricity supplies if safe to do so

Find out how from your supplier.

4. Move essential items to safety

Put items of personal value in a safe place.

5. What else can move to safety?

Think about your more expensive items and outside belongings.

useful numbers

Your important flood telephone numbers.

Fill this out and keep this leaflet with your flood kit.

Environment Agency Floodline	0845 988 1188*
Quickdial number	
Local authority emergency helpline	
Insurance company 24-hour number and policy number	
Local radio station frequency for news alerts and weather updates	
Family and neighbours	
Bank phone number and details	
Work phone numbers	
Doctor's surgery	
Local police station	
Vet/kennel/cattery	
Local hotel or B&B	
Gas supplier and meter number	
Electricity supplier and meter number	
Water supplier and meter number	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Builder	

*BT calls cost up to 4p/min plus 6p set-up fee from your home. Other providers and mobiles may vary.

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or about the environment?

Then call us on
08708 506 506** (Mon-Fri 8-6)

email
enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

or visit our website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)
floodline 0845 988 1188*

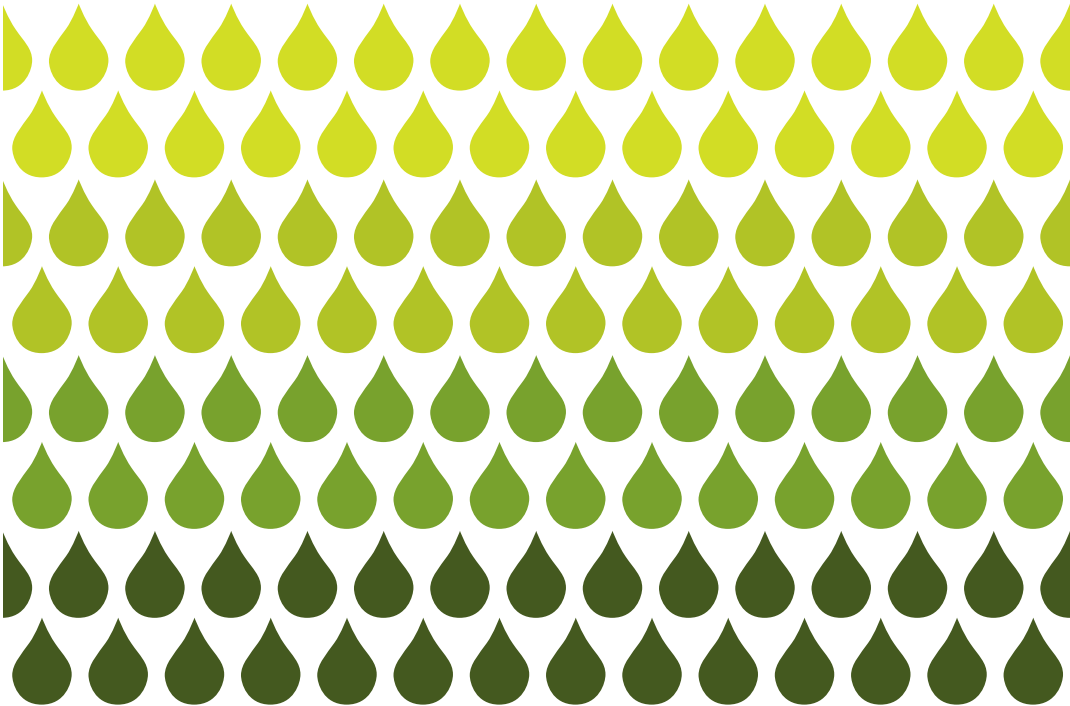
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After a flood

Practical advice on
recovering from a flood



We are the Environment Agency.

It's our job to make people aware of flooding from rivers and the sea, provide flood warning services and build and maintain flood defences.

This leaflet is to help you if you have been affected by flooding.

Published by:

Environment Agency

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Waterside Drive, Aztec West

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Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

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November 2007

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Other providers and mobiles may vary.

First steps

Find out if it is safe to return to your property

- Take care as there may be hidden dangers in the flood water like sharp objects, raised manhole covers and pollution.
- Flood water could have caused structural damage to your property.

Ring your buildings and contents insurance companies as soon as possible

- In almost all cases the insurance company will send a loss adjuster to look at your property. They will confirm what repairs and replacements are needed and covered by your policy.
- If you rent your property, contact your landlord and your contents insurance company as soon as possible.
- If you do not have insurance, your local council should be able to provide information on hardship grants or charities that may be able to help you.



call Floodline on
0845 988 1188*

Open 24 hours a day

- Get practical advice on what to do before, during and after flooding.
- Find out how you can get warnings in case of future flooding.

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clearing up after a flood

There are a number of things to be aware of when clearing up after a flood.

- 1.** Flood water can contain sewage, chemicals and animal waste. Always wear:
 - waterproof outerwear, including gloves;
 - wellington boots;
 - face mask.
- 2.** If your electricity supply is not already switched off at the mains, get a qualified person to do this. **DO NOT** touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water.
- 3.** You can get water out of your property using a pump and generator. Position the generator outside in the open air as generators produce carbon monoxide fumes which can kill.
- 4.** Only pump out water when flood levels outside your property start to be lower than inside. This reduces the risk of structural damage.
- 5.** Shovel mud away evenly from both sides of a wall. This stops pressure building up on one side.
- 6.** You can clean and disinfect your property using ordinary household products.
- 7.** A garden hose is useful for washing down. Do not use high-pressure hoses as they blast contaminated matter into the air.
- 8.** If you are drying your property naturally, keep doors and windows open as much as possible. If using dehumidifiers, close external doors and windows.
- 9.** If you have gas or oil central heating and it has been checked by an engineer, turn it on. Keep the thermostat between 20-22 degrees centigrade for steady drying.
- 10.** Local councils usually provide skips and extra rubbish collections for items that your insurance company has agreed you can throw away.



Wear your gloves when clearing up after a flood as water may contain sewage, chemicals and animal waste

dealing with an insurance claim

If flooding has caused damage to large parts of the country, you may have to wait for a loss adjuster to visit you.

Ask the insurance company

- How long it will be before the loss adjuster visits.
- If you are to clean your property or if they will get a company to do it for you.

Always make your own record of flood damage

- Use a permanent ink pen to mark on the wall the maximum height of the flood water. Do this in every room affected by flooding.
- Photograph or video record your damaged property. List the damage to your property and belongings.

- If your insurance policy covers you for loss of perishable goods, make a list of all the foods you throw away. Include any food touched by flood water and anything in your fridge or freezer ruined by loss of power.

Things to help with your insurance claim

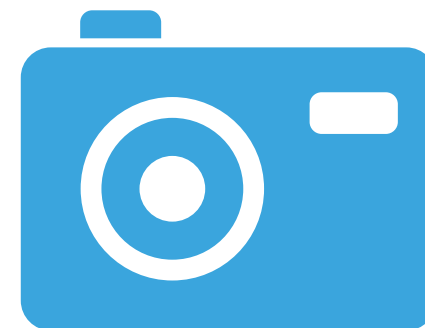
- Confirm the insurance company will pay for any service or equipment you need.
- Make a note of all telephone calls. Record the date, name and what was agreed.

- Keep copies of all letters, emails and faxes you send and receive.
- Keep receipts.
- Don't throw anything away until told (except ruined food).

Depending on your policy, the insurance company may only offer to clean and repair something, not replace it.

Photograph or video record your damaged property

If you do not have insurance, your local council should be able to provide information on hardship grants or charities that may be able to help you.



further steps to protect your property

As you plan your property repairs, you might want to think about ways to protect it from future flooding.

There are things you can do whilst repairing your property that will make it easier and cheaper to clean up after a future flood.

Here are some improvements you can make

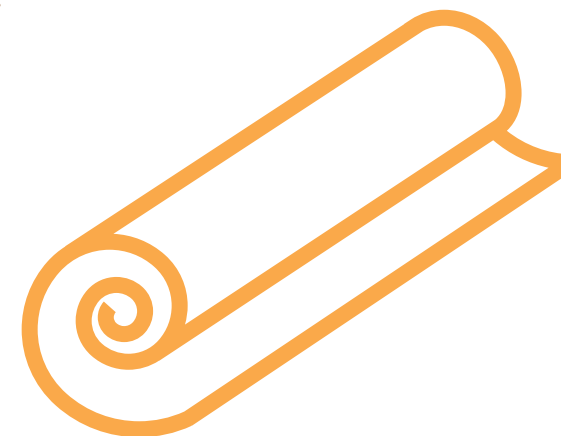
Discuss them with your loss adjuster and builder.

- Lay ceramic tiles on your ground floor and use rugs instead of fitted carpets.
- Raise the height of electrical sockets to at least 1.5 metres above ground floor level.
- Use lime plaster instead of gypsum on walls.
- Fit stainless steel or plastic kitchens instead of chipboard ones or have free-standing kitchen units you can move.
- Position any main parts of a heating or ventilation system, like a boiler, upstairs or raised well above the ground floor.
- Fit non-return valves to all drains and water inlet pipes.
- Replace wooden window frames and doors with synthetic ones. They are easier to clean.

Important!

Always use reputable building contractors. Beware bogus trade people calling door-to-door. Always check references and do not pay in advance.

Lay rugs instead of fitted carpets on your ground floor



temporary housing

Flood repairs can take weeks or months to complete, especially if there has been widespread flooding and builders are scarce. It takes time to dry out a property and some buildings have to be gutted before repair.

Ask your insurance company or landlord if they will provide you with temporary accommodation. This could be a nearby bed and breakfast, a static caravan or a rented house. You do not have to accept the first place you are offered.

However, if flooding has affected many people, the choice of accommodation may be limited.

If you will be in a temporary property for some time, think about having your post redirected.

Your insurance company should provide you with temporary accommodation



For more information

These organisations have advice, information and services to help you after a flood.

For general insurance queries contact

The Association of British Insurers

 www.abi.org.uk

 020 7600 3333

For flood products and services contact

National Flood Forum (Blue Pages)

 www.floodforum.org.uk

 01299 403055

The Construction Centre

 www.theconstructioncentre.co.uk

 01926 865825

For support, advice, recovery and restoration services contact

The British Damage Management Association (BDMA)

 www.bdma.org.uk

 07000 843 2362

For financial advice or your local Citizens Advice Bureau contact

Citizens Advice Bureau

 www.adviceguide.org.uk

 See local telephone directory

For information on repairs following floods contact

CIRIA  www.ciria.org/flooding

 020 7549 3300

For health information contact

Health Protection Agency

 www.hpa.org.uk

 01235 822 603/742


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