



Be Prepared: Surface Water Flooding



Surface water flooding, often referred to as flash flooding, can happen to anyone, you don't have to live in a flood risk area to be affected. When a large amount of rainfall overwhelms the drainage system, it cannot cope or may become blocked with debris, and any excess water could quickly find its way into your property. This can happen without much warning and it is difficult to predict accurately where heavy rain is likely to fall.

With a little bit of planning you may be able to avoid the worst and put measures in place to minimise damage to your property.

Be Prepared

The Environment Agency can advise if you are at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea and provides a free 24 hour flood warning service, but often there is limited advance warning for surface water flooding and the events are very localised.

The Met Office and local news, travel and weather bulletins will give you an indication of whether surface water flooding is likely or not. It's always



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useful to listen to any weather warnings that may be issued for your area. These will indicate whether heavy rainfall may be expected and give you time to think about what actions you can take to protect your property if you have nothing in place. The warnings are given a colour depending on a combination of both the likelihood of the event happening and the impact the conditions may have:

No Severe Weather	Be Aware	Be Prepared	Take Action

Yellow: Be aware. Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of your day to day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation and Yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days. Sometimes, due to the localised nature, the impact could be similar to the amber warning.

Amber: Be prepared. There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you, which could potentially disrupt your plans and possibly cause travel delays, difficult driving conditions due to spray and standing water, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office

Red: Take action. Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life is likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

Severe weather warnings are available to you in a number of ways, meaning you can always access the latest information wherever you are. This includes on radio, TV, the Met Office website, social media and smart phone apps. You can help by passing these warnings on to family and friends, or by sharing them on Facebook, Twitter and other social media with your friends and followers.



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What can you do before?

It is important to plan ahead and think about what you could do if it did happen to you. Find out as much as you can about the risk of flooding, protecting your property, the types of products available or preventative measures you may wish to consider to protect your property (e.g. air vent covers, non return valves).

Put together a plan so you can be better prepared if it does happen.

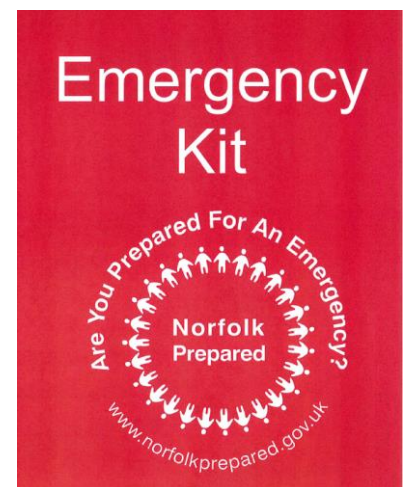
Think about:

- **Who do you need to contact and how?**
 - ✓ Keep a list of important contacts
 - ✓ Agree where you would go and how to contact each other
 - ✓ Think about who you could ask for help
 - ✓ Think about who you could help, particularly the elderly and more vulnerable
- **What would you need to move to a place of safety?**
 - ✓ Think about what you can move now, don't wait for a flood
 - ✓ Keep important documents and irreplaceable items of personal value in a safe place
 - ✓ Pets
 - ✓ Cars
 - ✓ Electrical equipment (e.g. computers, TV etc.)
- **Your insurance policy**
 - ✓ Check your buildings and contents cover
 - ✓ Confirm you are covered for flooding
 - ✓ Does the policy replace new for old?
 - ✓ Does it have a limit on repairs?
 - ✓ Don't underestimate the value of your contents
 - ✓ Difficulty getting insurance, check with Flood Re – a scheme that enables home owners to find affordable insurance if an eligible property is at risk of flooding



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- **Gas, electricity and water supplies**
 - ✓ Know how to turn your supply on and off, and that they work
 - ✓ Marks taps or switches with stickers to help you remember
 - ✓ If unsure, ask the next time you have the meter checked
- **Prepare an Emergency Kit of essential items and keep it handy. It should include:**
 - ✓ Your list of important contact details
 - ✓ Insurance policy number or copies of documents
 - ✓ Torch with spare batteries or a wind-up torch
 - ✓ Battery or wind-up radio
 - ✓ First aid kit and prescription medication
 - ✓ Bottled water and non perishable foods
 - ✓ Baby food and baby care items (if appropriate)
 - ✓ In the event of leaving home, don't forget spare keys and your wallet/purse/any medication (inhaler etc)



What should I do if it does happen?

You may have taken some measures to protect your property, but if surface water flooding occurs and you are totally unprotected, there are some simple swift actions you can take by using items that you may well have around your home.

For example, bin bags taped to the bottom of the outside door frame and weighed down with compost bags, carrier bags filled with soil, or something weighty, together with towels placed along the inside of the door could help to reduce the amount of water entering your home.

Sandbags are not provided to the public for surface water flooding incidents and are not encouraged as a flood preventative measure as they are heavy, difficult to handle and not effective on their own.



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In the event of a flash flood

- Never put yourself in any danger
- If you are at immediate risk of flooding and water is entering your premises, call 999 and ask for the Fire Service
- Block any air bricks to prevent flood water coming in
- Move pets and valuable items upstairs or to a place of safety
- Avoid walking, cycling or driving through flood water. There could be hidden dangers like sharp objects, raised manhole covers and could be polluted. If you take unnecessary risks, like driving along a flooded road when you don't know how deep it is and getting stuck, you add to the burden on the emergency services and may put other lives at risk
- Turn off the electricity and gas supply until a qualified electrician or engineer has inspected them. Don't touch any electrical appliances, cables or equipment while standing in flood water, or any appliances that have been immersed in flood water
- Avoid contact with flood water and wash your hands regularly with clean water and soap. Swallowing flood water or mud can cause diarrhoea, fever or abdominal pain

After a flash flood event

- Make your safety a priority
- DO NOT touch sources of electricity if you are standing in water. Do not turn on gas or electricity if they may have got wet. Only turn them on when they have been checked by a qualified engineer
- Ensure you inform your insurance company before you do anything to your flooded property or before you start throwing things away (if you do not it may invalidate any future claim for a flooding incident). If you are a tenant, call your landlord
- **Here are some things to ask your insurer:**
 - ✓ Who are they going to send and what will they do?
 - ✓ When will they visit? Is there anything that you can do yourself before they arrive?



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- ✓ Will they provide temporary accommodation?
 - ✓ Is there anything you need to arrange yourself?
 - ✓ When they are making repairs, will they make your home more resilient, such as fitting non return valves to drains and water inlet pipes?
- Take lots of photos for insurance purposes
 - Make a list of everything that has been damaged
 - Take meter readings of gas and electricity
 - Keep a notebook with a record of all conversations and communications with your insurance, contractors and consultants. Keep receipts of any works you commission yourself
 - If you do need to move to temporary accommodation make sure your insurance company know how to contact you
 - Gather valuable items not touched by floodwater and ask family or friends to look after them
 - Ensure good ventilation if using portable indoor heating appliances to dry out indoor spaces. Do not use petrol or diesel generators or other similar fuel-driven equipment indoors – the exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide which can kill
 - If you are drying your property naturally, keep doors and windows open as much as possible. If using dehumidifiers, close external doors and windows
 - When cleaning up, cover up any cuts or wounds, wear protective clothing (rubber gloves) and be sure to thoroughly wash your hands afterwards. If there is no clean water, use wet wipes or hand sanitising gel
 - Clean all hard surfaces (such as walls and floors) with hot water and detergent. Hard surfaces contaminated by sewage need to be cleaned and disinfected
 - Do not eat food that may have come into contact with flood water. Do not eat fresh food from the fridge or freezer if electricity has been turned off for more than 4 hours
 - If you notice a change in your tap water quality, such as change in the colour, taste or smell, phone your water company. If you are on a



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private water supply, use bottled water or boil water until you are confident that your water supply is back to normal

- Always use reputable building contractors. Beware of bogus trade people calling door to door. Always check references and do not pay in advance
- Report any flooding to your property to the Flood and Water Management Team at Norfolk County Council (this is not for emergencies). Email photos or videos, together with as much information as you can to water.management@norfolk.gov.uk. You can also report past flooding that has affected your property or community. Alternatively, report online at <https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/floodreport/https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/floodreport/>
- Flooding is stressful. It is normal to feel anxious or upset. Take care of yourself and family. Check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours

Other things to consider

- Water butts can provide a small scale flood storage and reduce the amount of water that would add to the 'run off'
- Consider more permeable surfaces such as grass and gravel to allow water to soak away naturally. This reduces 'run off' from hard surfaces such as tarmac that can cause flooding
- If you are building an extension or conservatory, patio or driveway, ensure that all surface water drainage will not add to the flood risk in your area. Consider permeable paving to allow water to soak through the surface for storage below and slow release into the ground or drainage system
- Ensure guttering, downpipes, drainage gates are not obstructed
- Ensure ditches are not obstructed and do not dump rubbish which can block the flow of water
- Improve drainage in areas already prone to flooding
- If you live in a flood risk area, consider more permanent flood preventative products such as flood proof doors, air brick covers, sewer brakes (to prevent backflow through the sewer system)





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Some helpful contacts:

Organisation	Telephone No
Emergency Services	999
Police (non emergencies)	101
NHS (non emergencies)	111
Environment Agency Floodline	0845 988 1188
Norfolk County Council	0344 800 8020
District Council	
Electricity provider	
Electricity (emergencies/power cut)	0800 783 8838
National Gas (emergencies)	0800 111 999
Telephone provider	
Water provider	
Insurance – house and contents	
Insurance – car	

Useful websites:

- [Met Office](#)
- [Environment Agency](#)
- [Anglian Water – Sewage Flooding Advice](#)
- [Flood and Water Management](#)
- [Know your Flood Risk](#)
- [National Flood Forum](#)
- [Norfolk Prepared – Preparing your Home](#)
- [FloodRe](#)

