



# flooding- minimising the risk

Flood plan pack for communities and groups

Practical advice to help you create a flood plan



We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it **a better place** – for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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# Why you should read this pack

Understanding the risk of flooding and preparing for it now will help save lives and minimise the damage and distress flooding can cause.

Working together as a community or group will help you respond quickly and efficiently when flooding occurs.

## **Who is this pack for ?**

This pack is a guide for anyone involved in supporting communities or groups to improve their ability to plan for a flood.

This could be:

- People active in the local community
- Leaders of community groups
- Schools, hospitals or residential care homes

...as well as any other interested members of the community.

This pack outlines things to consider and practical steps that you can take to inspire and involve residents and local communities and groups to work together to improve how you and they deal with a flood.



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# The importance of planning

## Why you need to plan for flooding and other emergencies

1

The importance of planning / Why you need to plan for flooding and other emergencies

### Emergency planning

Having a flood plan forms an important part of your emergency plans. There are other situations for which you might require an emergency plan, such as pandemic flu, Foot and Mouth disease and transport problems. Some county councils have been encouraging communities via the Parish Council to develop a community emergency plan for these types of situations. View your Council's website for further advice and information or contact their Emergency Planning Officer for help in developing an emergency plan for your community. Consider storing all your plans together, in one place.

### The UK Resilience website

The UK Resilience website is run as a news and information service for emergency practitioners by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat at The Cabinet Office. You can obtain more detailed information on civil protection topics at [www.ukresilience.info](http://www.ukresilience.info)

### Emergency Planning Officer

Your local district council may have an officer with an emergency planning role. They should be kept closely informed and invited to have input into your plans. They will be able to give advice on things such as sandbags and help available during a flooding event. They may also explain the liaison they have with other agencies who are involved in emergency situations.

The Environment Agency and possibly your local council may be willing to come and give talks at local meetings to help you promote your plan.

Being prepared for emergencies can help to reduce the stress, panic and loss of life these situations can cause.

### The benefits of flood plans

Working together as a community or group has multiple benefits on the ground. It can:

- improve communication before, during and after a flood incident, making sure the right people are involved at the right time
- prevent different people or groups doing the same thing, saving time and money
- help share local knowledge and that of people who have been flooded with professional organisations and ensure people's concerns are heard
- clarify the responsibilities of all those involved
- encourage the involvement of volunteers, and
- reduce the damage and distress of flooding by helping people to prepare.

Being involved in flood planning will enable your community or group to take control and help during a flood, when other organisations could be over-stretched or unable to reach you.

Involving local people helps your community become more flood resilient.



### Local co-ordination

For any plan to succeed you need to ensure that there are sufficient volunteers to carry out the actions described. Names and contact phone numbers need to be listed and made available to all potential emergency team members.

Once the list is prepared it's also important that someone be given the task of updating any changes to the team, an out of date phone number is worse than none. Members of your group will probably be first on the list and be allocated tasks e.g. phoning external agencies and local contacts, or alerting vulnerable residents.

It is vital the flood plan outline is discussed with the relevant agencies including district council, Environment Agency, local landowners and water companies.

### Flood risk areas and flooding mechanisms

It is important that the types of flooding which can occur within the area are fully understood. They may include:

- Tidal – sea
- Fluvial – river
- Surface water – roads, ditches and fields
- Groundwater – high water table
- Sewage – sewers, rising mains and pumping stations
- Potable supply – mains water supply

#### Investigate

Investigate the range and extent of flooding in the area. Special consideration should be given to the timing and direction of flooding (flow route). Often, the source of flooding is not immediately obvious; check local drainage and small watercourses.



#### Gathering information

Find out about previous flooding in your area. Sources of information include the Environment Agency, district council and local library archives. Local knowledge, particularly from long-standing residents, is invaluable.



### Local flood actions

With careful planning, local preventative flood action can reduce, or possibly avoid, the impact of flooding. Local action could include placing of floodboards across openings; blocking airbricks; creating sandbag walls or temporary defence systems.

### Health and safety – reduce the risk to life

The overall aim of any flood plan is to reduce the risk to the life of people in the area your flood plan covers. The health and safety of volunteers must be considered when planning a local flood action. At no time should a volunteer be asked to carry out anything that could put their life at risk. Each volunteer must be advised to assess any situation and request help if required before proceeding. Remember your team are local volunteers and not trained members of the emergency services. High visibility jackets may be issued by the Environment Agency to help volunteers be seen and identify them and their role during flooding. Contact your local Environment Agency office.

### Vulnerable people and places

Certain groups, the elderly or infirm for example, may require assistance in a flood. These needs should be established in advance. Help encourage people who may need more time during a flooding event to prepare now.

Some locations may be more vulnerable than others. Identify properties which may flood first. Any schools, residential care homes or campsites in your area may require assistance or an early warning. The people in charge of such properties should develop their own flood plan.



### Flood warnings

The Environment Agency issues flood warnings for specific areas. During a flood, information is available from the Environment Agency's website: **[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)** or the Environment Agency's Floodline service: **0845 988 1188**. Floodline uses quickdial numbers to speed up access to local flood information. Quickdial numbers relate to geographic areas.

**Call Floodline to find out the quickdial number for your area.**



### Actions

It is vital that you are aware of the actions taken by all organisations that respond to flooding. This will help you contact the correct organisation when you need help. This document lists the principal actions of each organisation. It may not always be possible for all actions to be carried out during a flood event.

Responding organisations have limited resources so may not be able to provide assistance in all circumstances. In such cases the owners and occupiers need to be aware that they should make their own arrangements to protect their property from flooding. This should be clearly stated in the plan.

Many factors may influence the level of response. Priority is likely to be given to the old or infirm when assisting people, and to property which is occupied. The classification of roads may be used in prioritising the response to road flooding; protection of commercial property may depend on the risk of environmental pollution from stored chemicals etc.



# How will you know when to activate your plan?

## 2

### Flood warnings from the Environment Agency

The Environment Agency offers a free flood warning service in many areas at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. 'Floodline Warnings Direct' (FWD) gives you an advance warning for your area by telephone, mobile, fax, pager, text or email. All you need to register is a telephone or fax number to which we can send flood warnings at any time of the day or night.

**Not all areas at risk of flooding are covered by the service**

Find out if you can receive free flood warnings from the Environment Agency in your area by phoning Floodline on 0845 988 1188.

#### To find out current flood warnings in force:

- Check out current flood warnings in force on the Environment Agency website:  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/floodwarning](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/floodwarning)
- Ring **Floodline** on **0845 988 1188**, the Environment Agency's 24-hour telephone information service. They can provide you with a quickdial number which allows direct access to any recorded flood warnings for your local area;
- Listen to local radio and TV for weather information.

#### Know the flood warning codes

If you register to receive flood warnings it is important to know the flood warning codes and understand what they mean. See the insert in the back pocket of this pack that explains the flood warning codes.



## If flood warnings are not available from the Environment Agency

If there is no flood warning available from the Environment Agency for your local area, then you need to have your own system in place for triggering your plan. The following points should help when establishing a trigger:

- Use local information and observations. You are the local experts and will know, for instance, whether the river responds rapidly or not to heavy rainfall;
- The trigger needs to relate to a rising river level that is approaching bank full. If the river responds rapidly, you may need to set a lower level as your trigger;

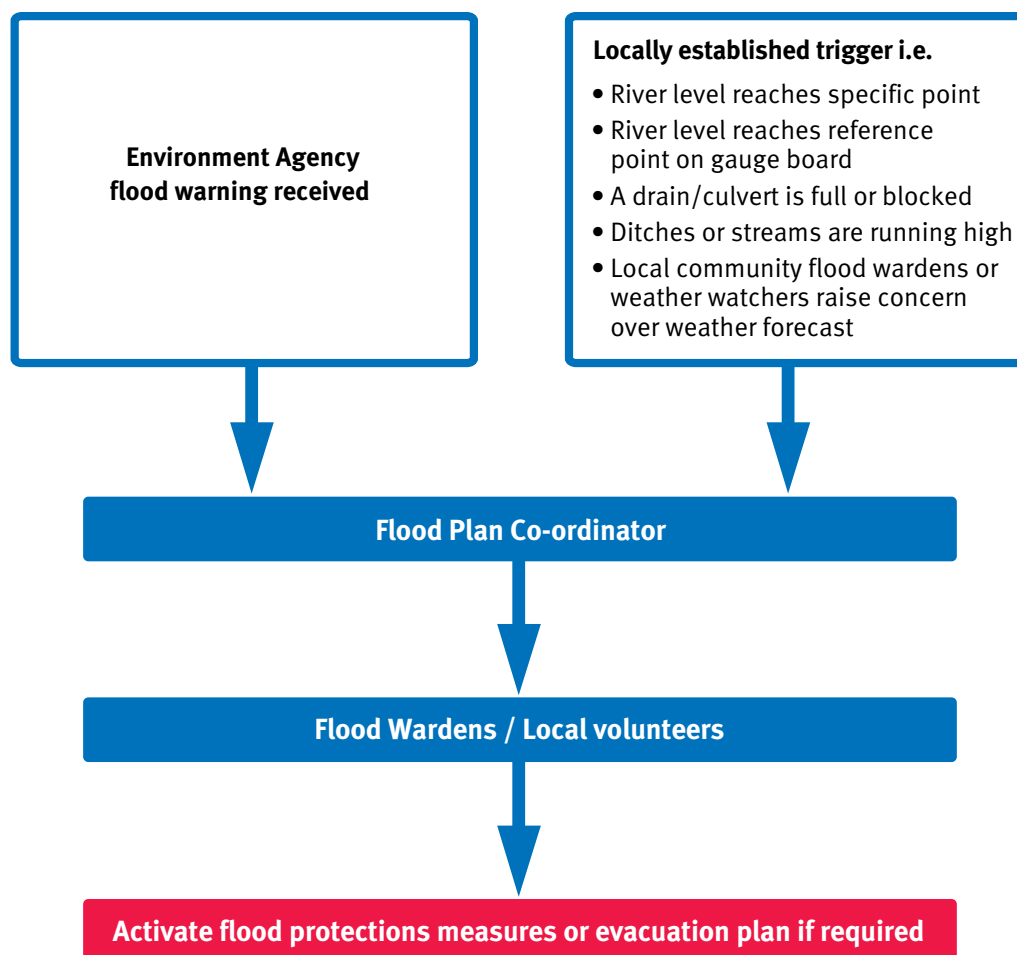
- Consider putting a depth marker by the river to help gauge levels. A marker will help confirm whether the river is rising or falling. Alternatively use an existing structure such as a bridge or other local reference on the river that shows you when the river is getting to dangerous levels;
- Decide on a river level that is the point when you will put your plan into action and write this in your flood plan.

The Environment Agency is more than willing to advise you on monitoring techniques and flood warning methods. If you need help with flood warning arrangements ring your local Environment Agency office.



## 2

## Cascade of information during a flood event



### Flood Plan Co-ordinator

- Be aware of the current situation
- Contact cascade of flood wardens or volunteers and advise on actions to prepare for flooding
- Liaise with the Local Authority, Environment Agency and other organisations
- Update the flood wardens if the situation changes

### Flood Wardens/volunteers

- Act on the advice received from the flood plan co-ordinator or their assistant
- Put flood protection measures in place
- Help and advise vulnerable people and help move them to safety early if required
- Inform the community of the situation and advise them to prepare by moving cars, putting sandbags or floodboards in place etc

**At no time should any volunteer or flood warden put their own life at risk.**



# Who does what during a flood?

## Environment Agency

- Issue flood warnings
- Receive and record details of flooding incidents
- Monitor the situation and advise other organisations
- Deal with emergency repairs and blockages on main rivers and own structures
- Respond to pollution incidents
- Advise on waste disposal issues

## County Council and Unitary Authority

- Co-ordinate emergency arrangements
- Maintain safe conditions on the roads
- Put flood warning signs on the highway
- Organise road closures and traffic diversions
- Clear blockages on highway drainage systems
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the highway where there is a failure of the highway drainage system

## District Council

- Co-ordinating role for own area
- Flood warning dissemination (by local agreement with Environment Agency)
- Emergency assistance (S138 LGA 1972) — Provide sandbags
- Clear blocked watercourses (Land Drainage Act powers)
- Environmental health issues — pollution
- Clear blocked road channels and gully gratings — street cleaning
- Emergency planning support groups

## Town and Parish Council

- Flood warning dissemination (by local agreement with Environment Agency)
- Distribute sandbags from district council stockpiles

## Police

- Take an overall co-ordination role during an incident.

## Fire and Rescue Service

- Rescue
- Respond to all emergency incidents as required
- Assist the populace where a need is identified and the use of Fire Service personnel and equipment is relevant

## Water companies

- Clear blockages in public sewers
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the public water mains or discharges from the public sewerage systems

## Electricity, gas and telecommunication companies

- Attend to emergencies relating to their service at properties where life is at risk as a result of flooding
- Attend to flooding emergencies at their own serviced installations

## Large industrial companies

- Protect own premises and installations
- Provide resources which could be hired

## Property owners

- Move to a safe area if life at risk
- Prevent water from entering property if possible
- Switch off electricity and gas supplies at mains
- Move valuable possessions above areas liable to be flooded



### Liaison arrangements

It is also important to keep residents informed of the current position and deal with local concerns. During a flood, information may flow in many directions. This information needs to be co-ordinated and consistent. Additionally, the information gathered during a flood may help to improve the flood plan for future floods. It may also be useful to the Environment Agency and district council.

### Recovery action

The recovery and clean-up period following a flood often involves more effort than that required during it. Certainly, recovery times are likely to be much longer than the flood duration.

Make a list of businesses that will be useful after a flood, such as builders, plumbers and decorators.



To help us improve our service and your plan make a list of properties flooded, flood levels and timings and share this information with those involved.

The flood plan should be reviewed using experience gained from each flood, making appropriate improvements to the flood plan.

***It should also be checked annually for any changes required to contact telephone numbers.***



# Flood plans

## Practical steps to help you develop your flood plan

Your plan template is contained in the back pocket of this pack. It should be filled in with the information you have gathered for inclusion in your final flood plan document. You need to describe how information will be supplied, received and recorded during a flood.

Include details of local flood co-ordination centre; means of reporting incidents; location of emergency evacuation rest centres; methods of passing on information e.g. notice boards; flood risk areas, including properties at risk.

 Environment Agency

community flood plan

Parishes and communities working together

Community or group

Address

Floodline quickdial number

Which Environment Agency flood warnings are you registered to receive?

Local flood warning trigger  
i.e. when water reaches bottom of the bridge, sound siren

Date

Be prepared for flooding. Act now



# Flood plans

## 4 Step 1 (Section 1 A of the template)

From the information you have available make a list of areas liable to flood and the level of warning which would affect them.

1

Locations at risk of flooding

A

Flood warnings

From the information you have available make a list of areas liable to flood and the level of warning which would affect them.

Level of warning	Location at risk	Action	Notes
Flood Watch	Roads and low lying land next to the river	Call the Environment Agency's Floodline for additional information using the quickdial number for your area XXXXX	If weather conditions are going to get worse the Environment Agency Flood Warning Incident Room will be open and you can call the duty officer direct on tel: XXXXX XXXXXX (this number is ex directory and should not be given out)

## Step 2 (Section 1 B of the template)

Insert details of areas at risk from flooding and potential flow routes. Include maps, if possible, and details of existing defences.

1

Actions to be taken before a flood

B

Locations at risk of flooding / Source of flooding

Insert details of areas at risk from flooding and potential flow routes. Include maps, if possible and details of existing defences.

Area number	Location at risk	Source of flooding	Flow route
Area 1	Brook Terrace	River	Water flows down footpath Via High Street (B313)

## Step 3 (Section 2 A of the template)

Identify local flood actions

2

Actions to be taken during a flood

A

Local flood actions

Identify local flood actions

Area number	Location at risk	Action / trigger	Local action	Equipment required	Time required
Area 1	Brook Terrace	Flood warning	Block the flow route where the footpath joins the High Street	Sandbags and polythene sheeting	1 hour and 30 min
Area 2					



# Flood plans

## Step 4 (Section 2 B of the template)

Create a table of local volunteers/flood wardens that could be contacted in an incident. They may required to lift heavy sandbags so should be reasonably active or fit. Consider using other volunteers as communicators, administrators or minders of vulnerable people during an incident.

These volunteers could be registered on the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct service so they receive the flood warnings.

**Volunteers must not put their own life at risk.**

## Step 5 (Section 2 C of the template)

Make a list of important telephone numbers so all the information you require during an incident is readily available.

2 Actions to be taken during a flood		C Important telephone numbers	
Make a list of important telephone numbers so all the information you require during an incident is readily available.			
Organisation	Telephone (office hours)	Telephone (out of hours)	Fax
Floodline	0845 988 1188	0845 988 1188	
Environment Agency			

## Step 6 (Section 2 D of the template)

Identify available resources.

2 Actions to be taken during a flood		D Available resources		
Identify available resources.				
Organisation	Resource	Number	Location	Notes
Local Health Centre/Doctors Surgery Contact Details: Dr Knott tel no: Mrs Clark tel no:	Evacuation centre	The health centre can hold up to 100 people. Anyone evacuated should take with them: warm clothing, a torch, food, drink, medication, children's toys and pets requirements etc	The health centre is situated on the outside of the flood risk area and access to the surgery can be made without driving or walking through floodwater.	Dr Knott and Mrs Clark are both key holders to the health centre
Local storage facility? District Council Contact details:	Sandbags, shovels, polythene sheeting, floodboards, torches etc		Local shopkeepers store	Shopkeeper has provided a key for access to equipment in his/her absence



# Flood plans

4

## **Step 7** (Section 2 E of the template )

Details of specific arrangements between the various authorities to be included here.

## **Step 8** (Section 2 F of the template )

List vulnerable people, properties and locations where early assistance may be required.

## **Step 9** (Section 3 A of the template )

Make a list of reputable contractors who may be required after a flood.



# Flood plans

## Promote your flood plan

Having completed the information in the tables provided you should now be able to start to put your flood plan together.

### Raise awareness



You and the team who have developed the plan have worked hard to help the community be prepared, so you should let them know the flood plan exists. Consider advertising by:

- Public meeting
- Parish newsletter
- Information leaflet drop
- Local press
- Flood exhibition

The Environment Agency may be able to help you raise awareness and promote your plan. Call 08708 506 506 and ask to be put through to your local Flood Incident Management Team.

Remind local residents that they have a duty to prepare and protect their lives and property. They could check to see if they can receive a flood warning or develop their own personal flood plan and prepare for evacuation. A personal flood plan template is included in this pack for your information.

### Test your flood plan



The next step is to see if your plan works. You could ask the Environment Agency and local authority to help you carry out a simulated flooding event. This would also help to check that communications are correctly set up and that contact numbers are up to date.

### Keep your plan up to date



Your plan has been designed and developed by you and your community and belongs to you and not the Environment Agency or local authority. You will need to ensure that the details in your plan are checked and updated regularly so that all details remain up to date with current contact numbers.



# Notes

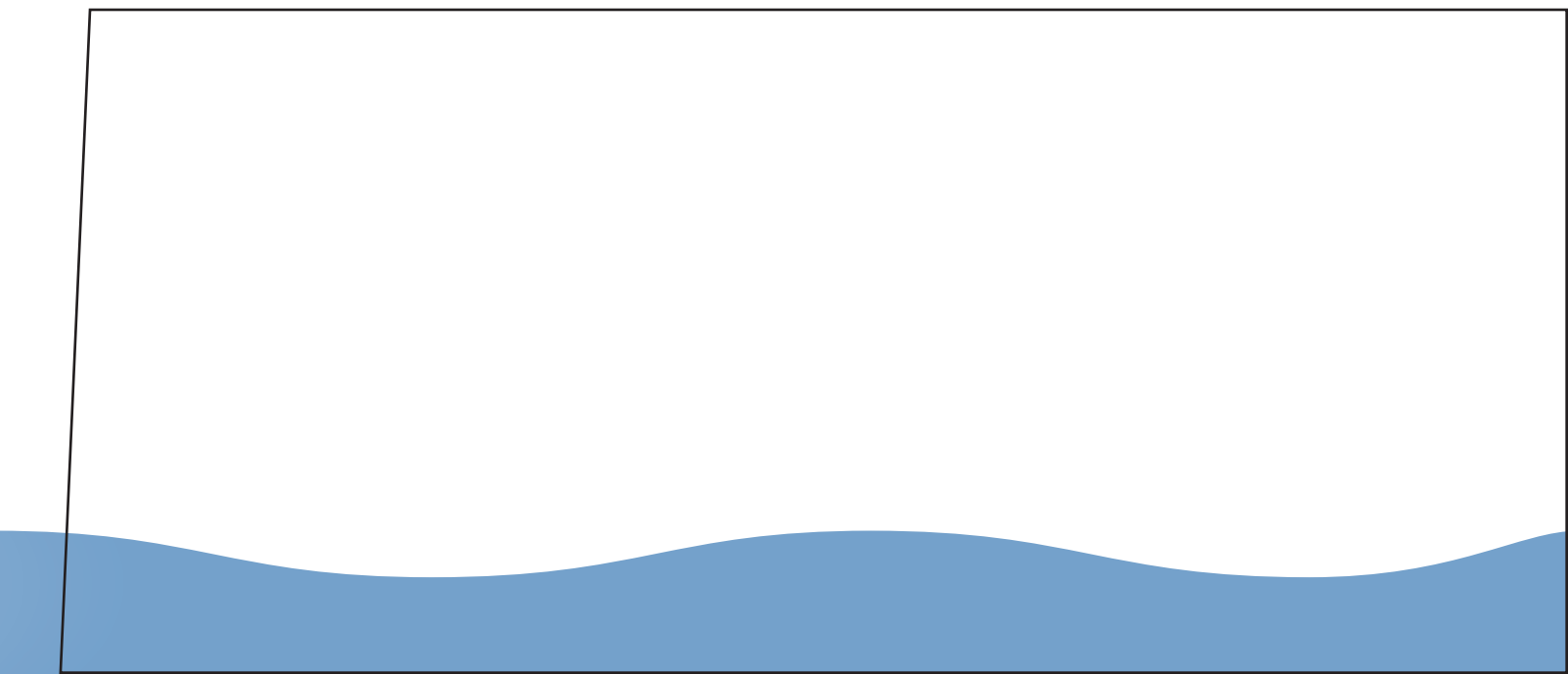
4

Flood plans / Notes



**Additional resources**

- Community flood plan template
- Flooding who can help
- Personal flood plan template
- DVD – floodPACT – parishes and communities working together
- Flood warning codes
- Flood risk area map
- Additional information for areas which are prone to flash flooding (if applicable)
- Rapid response information (if applicable)





# community flood plan

Parishes and communities working together

Community  
or group

Address

Floodline quickdial number

Which Environment Agency flood warnings  
are you registered to receive?

Local flood warning trigger  
*i.e. when water reaches bottom  
of the bridge, sound siren*

Date

Be prepared for flooding. Act now



## 1

### Actions to be taken before a flood

- A** Locations at risk of flooding / Flood warnings
- B** Locations at risk of flooding / Source of flooding
- C** Locations at risk of flooding / Map showing flood route

## 2

### Actions to be taken during a flood

- A** Local flood actions
- B** Local volunteers / flood wardens
- C** Important telephone numbers
- D** Available resources
- E** Arrangements between authorities
- F** Vulnerable residents, properties and locations

## 3

### After a flood

- A** Reputable contractors



# 1 Locations at risk of flooding

## A Flood warnings

From the information you have available make a list of areas liable to flood and the level of warning which would affect them.

Level of warning	Location at risk	Action	Notes
Flood Watch			
Flood Warning			
Severe Flood Warning			
All Clear			



1 Actions to be taken before a flood

B

Locations at risk of flooding / Source of flooding

Insert details of areas at risk from flooding and potential flow routes. Include maps, if possible and details of existing defences.

Area number	Location at risk	Source of flooding	Flow route
Area 1			
Area 2			
Area 3			
Area 4			
Area 5			
Area 6			



## 1 Actions to be taken before a flood

### C

Locations at risk of flooding / Map showing flow route

Include a map in the flood plan showing the flood risk area and possible flow route





## 2 Actions to be taken during a flood

## A Local flood actions

Identify local flood actions							
Area number	Location at risk	Action / trigger	Local action	Equipment required	Time required		
Area 1							
Area 2							
Area 3							
Area 4							
Area 5							
Area 6							
Area 7							
Area 8							



## B Local volunteers / flood wardens

List companies / reputable contractors whose help you may need after a flood. Get contracts in place, or know who to call for assistance. If help is not needed, you can leave this section blank. If you plan to do the work yourself leave this section blank. These volunteers could be registered on the Environment Agency's Floodline Warnings Direct service so they receive the flood warnings. **Volunteers must not put their own life at risk.**

[illegible]



## 2 Actions to be taken during a flood

## C Important telephone numbers

Make a list of important telephone numbers so all the information you require during an incident is readily available.

Organisation	Telephone (office hours)	Telephone (out of hours)	Fax
Floodline	0845 988 1188	0845 988 1188	
Environment Agency			
District Council			
County Council			
County Contracting			
Fire & Rescue Service			
Police			
Ambulance Service			
Housing Unit			
Environment Unit			
Water Company			
Electricity Company			
Gas Company			
Telecommunications Company			
Adjacent Town/Parish Councils			



## 2 Actions to be taken during a flood

### D

### Available resources

Identify available resources.

Organisation	Resource	Number	Location	Notes



## E Arrangements between authorities

Details of specific arrangements between the various authorities to be included here.

[illegible]



## Vulnerable residents, properties and locations

List vulnerable people, properties and locations where early assistance may be required.

[illegible]



## A Reputable contractors

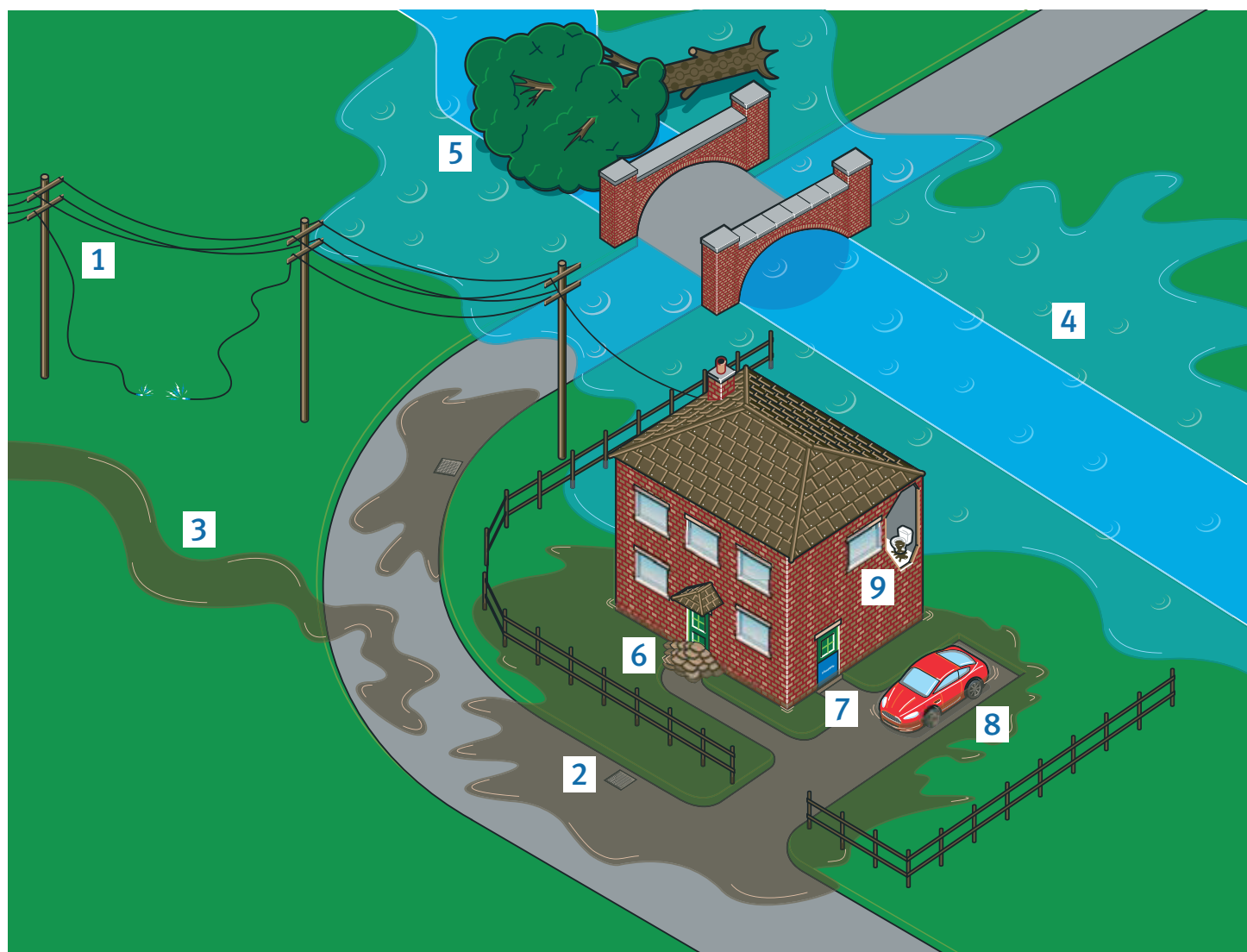
[illegible]



# Flooding - who can help?

## Contact:

- 1 Your supplier if you are concerned about floodwater affecting your gas, electricity or sewerage supplies.
- 2 Your local council or Highways Agency for flooding caused by blocked drains.
- 3 Your local council or Highways Agency if you are concerned about flooding caused by water running off fields.
- 4 The Environment Agency for advice on flooding from rivers and the sea.
- 5 The Environment Agency if you notice an obstruction in the river.
- 6 Your local council to see if they provide sandbags or buy your own supply from local builder's merchants.
- 7 The Environment Agency for advice on flood protection products.
- 8 Your insurance company to check whether your property is covered for flood damage.
- 9 Your local water company if your toilet is backing up during floods.





# Personal flood plan

Name



Which flood warnings are you registered to receive?

River:

Quickdial no:

Reach:

General contact list	Company name	Contact name	Telephone
Floodline	Environment Agency		0845 988 1188
Electricity provider			
Gas provider			
Water company			
Telephone provider			
Insurance company and policy number			
Local council			
Local radio station			
Travel/weather info			

## Key locations

Service cut-off	Description of location
Electricity	
Gas	
Water	

## Who can help?

Relationship	Name	Contact details	How they can help?
Relative			
Friend or neighbour			

Be prepared for flooding. Act now



# Personal flood plan

## What can I do NOW?



<input type="checkbox"/> Put important documents out of flood risk and protect in polythene	<input type="checkbox"/> Look at the best way of stopping floodwater entering your property	<input type="checkbox"/> Find out where you can get sandbags	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify what you would need to take with you if you had to leave your home
<input type="checkbox"/> Check your insurance covers you for flooding	<input type="checkbox"/> Make a flood plan and prepare a flood kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify who can help you	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand the flood warning codes

### What can you do when you receive a flood warning?

Actions	Location
<b>Home</b>	
● Move furniture and electrical items upstairs	
● Put flood boards, polythene and sandbags in place	
● Make a list now of what you can move upstairs or away from the risk	
● Turn off electricity, water and gas supplies	
● Roll up carpets and rugs	
● Unless you have time to remove them hang curtains over rods	
● Move sentimental items to safety	
● Put important documents in polythene bags and move to safety	
<b>Garden and outside</b>	
● Move your car out of the flood risk area	
● Move any large or loose items or weigh them down	
<b>Business</b>	
● Move important documents, computers and stock	
● Alert staff and request their help	
● Farmers move animals and livestock to safety	
<b>Evacuation - Prepare a flood kit in advance</b>	
● Inform your family or friends that you may need to leave your home	
● Get your flood kit together and include a torch, warm and waterproof clothing, water, food, medication, toys for children and pets, rubber gloves and wellingtons	

Be prepared for flooding. Act now



# Flood warnings

## Flood warnings from the Environment Agency

### Flood warning codes

### Meaning

### General advice



**Flooding of low-lying land and roads is expected. Be aware! Be prepared! Watch out!**

- Ring Floodline **0845 988 1188** for up to date flooding information
- Stay tuned to local radio or TV for weather and travel bulletins
- Make sure you have what you need to put your flood plan into action
- Alert staff
- Alert visitors, particularly the elderly
- Drive carefully, roads may be flooded



**Flooding of homes and businesses is expected. Act now!**

- Do as much as you can in daylight
- Move visitors, pets, vehicles and other items to safety
- Put sandbags and flood boards in place
- Be prepared to turn off gas and electricity supplies
- Be prepared to evacuate your site
- Have warm blankets available and check you have adequate water and food available
- Don't drive through water



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

Follow the actions as with a flood warning plus:

- Be prepared to lose power supplies – gas, electricity, water, telephone
- Try to keep calm and reassure others – especially children
- Co-operate with emergency services and local authorities
- Avoid contact with floodwater



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

- Check it is safe to return
- Keep an eye on the weather and water levels in case the situation deteriorates and new flood warnings are issued



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

**Then call us on**

**08708 506 506** (Mon-Fri 8-6)

**email**

**[enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)**

**or visit our website**

**[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)**

**incident hotline 0800 80 70 60** (24hrs)

**floodline 0845 988 1188**



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