

**RECOMMENDED ITEM FROM SUSTAINABLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**472. PATCH MANAGEMENT POLICIES – FLY TIPPING POLICY  
AND FLOOD PROTECTION POLICY**

Any comments and/or recommendations from Members' on either the Fly Tipping or Flood Protection policies would be presented to the Patch Management Working Group and included as issues for consideration in a report to Executive.

Fly Tipping Policy

The Street Services Manager presented the draft Fly Tipping Policy to the meeting for Members' consideration.

The Policy had previously been considered by the Equalities Services Development Group and Senior Management Team, and was approved by the Patch Management Group on 13th February, 2011.

Councillor Fritchley queried the definition of fly tipping and its difference to litter.

The Street Services Manager replied that the definition of fly tipping was the illegal deposit of waste contrary to section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Generally the difference between fly tipping and litter is that litter is small items carelessly discarded and fly tipping is transporting waste to a location with the purpose of dumping it.

Councillor Parkin queried how many specialist waste sites were in the District and if these were open to the public. The Street Services Manager replied that there was a waste site on the former Coalite site at Bolsover and this was advertised in the Council's literature. He added that County Councils were responsible for providing these specialist sites.

A short discussion took place.

Further to a question raised by Councillor Fritchley, the Street Services Manager advised Members that there was no evidence that fly tipping in the District had increased since the Council introduced charges for bulky refuse collection.

Councillor Kelly added that it was hoped that in the future, a specialist waste site open to members of the public would be provided at Clover Nook, South Normanton.

A question was raised with regard to what the public could and could not take to the specialist waste sites, for example, asbestos. The Street Services Manager commented that both BDC's and DCC's website advertised what could and could not be taken to the sites. A short discussion took place and it

was agreed that this needed advertising in the Council's literature also for people who did not have access to the web.

### Flood Protection Policy

The Street Services Manager presented the draft Flood Protection Policy to the meeting for Members' consideration.

The Policy explained how the District Council dealt with flood warnings and made clear what the household's responsibilities are and what the Council's responsibilities are.

Further to questions raised by Members, the Street Services Manager advised the meeting that surface water was the responsibility of water companies and river water the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Derbyshire County Council does supply the Council with sandbags and the Council also keep their own stock.

Members raised questions with regard to Parish and Town Council's responsibilities. The Street Services Manager commented that Parish and Town Councils should pass any localised problems they are aware of onto the District Council.

A short discussion took place.

Councillor Munks raised that street gullies were not cleared out properly. The Street Services Manager replied that the District Council used to cleanse street gullies on behalf of the County Council but County had now taken this responsibility back in house.

Councillor Kelly commented that assisting with flood alleviation and providing equipment was not statutory and came at a cost to the Authority. Queries were raised as to who would pay/provide sandbags in an emergency and where the Environment Agency's responsibilities lie.

The Street Services Manager replied that he would take these comments back to the Patch Management Group.

The Street Services Manager drew the meetings attention to an amendment necessary in the Flood Protection Policy which was a change to the contact details for Derbyshire County Council. He also added that the review date would be twelve months after the approval date of the policy.

Moved and seconded

**RESOLVED** that the Fly Tipping Policy and the Flood Protection Policy be accepted.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Fly Tipping Policy and the Flood Protection Policy be forwarded to the Executive for approval.

(Street Services Manager / Head of Democratic Services)

Committee:	Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee	Agenda Item No.:	6.
Date:	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2011	Category	*
Subject:	Patch Management Policies; Fly Tipping, Flood Protection	Status	Open
Report by:	Street Services Manager		
Other Officers involved:	Patch Management Working Group		
Director	Director of Neighbourhoods		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	D. Kelly Cabinet Member for Environment		

#### **RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS**

**Community Safety - ensuring that communities are safe and secure.**

To tackle anti-social behaviour and its causes. Illegal waste activities, such as fly-tipping, unregistered waste carriers, unauthorised transfer stations, landfill sites and other illegal waste activities are a criminal offence and are anti social, tackling these offences helps people feel safer and secure.

**Customer Focused Services - providing excellent customer focused services.** To improve the quality and consistency of services received by customers. The Policy gives clear understanding to customers, Councillors and employees on the Councils responsibilities and what actions it will take in dealing with fly tipped waste.

**Environment - promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment.** To protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way. Fly-tipping reduces the quality and enjoyment of the environment and it can begin a spiral of decline in local environmental quality. It can cause serious pollution of the environment.

**Regeneration - developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities.** To contribute to improving the health of the district. Fly-tipping also reduces the quality of life and can be a risk to human health and may harm wildlife and farm animals and can contaminate water courses.

**Strategic Organisational Development - continually improving our organization.** To continue to monitor, review and improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services.

**TARGETS**

Does not directly contribute to any targets specified in the Corporate Plan.

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

Through raising awareness, education, use of Duty of Care and by ensuring better prevention and detection of fly tipping and other forms of illegal waste dumping. The Council is of the firm belief that more effort spent on these aspects will mean less needs to be spent on clear-ups and enforcement action which will result in cost savings.

**THE REPORT**

The Patch Management Working Group (PMWG) has identified a need for a Council Policies on the following subject(s);

Fly tipping  
Flood Protection

Copies of the draft policies are attached to this report for consideration by Members.

Member's comments and/or recommendations will be considered by the Patch Management Working Group and included as issues for consideration in a report to Executive.

The draft policies were submitted to the following groups for consideration and comment.

Equalities Services Development Group (ESDG) on 15 November 2010.  
Senior Management Team (SMT) on 13 May 2011.

The attached draft policies were approved by the Patch Management Group on 13 February 2011.

**ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

The ESDG recommended that no changes were necessary to the policies. SMT recommended that no substantive changes were necessary to the policies.

**IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: None  
Legal: None  
Human Resources: None

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. Scrutiny Committee supports the implementation of the Fly Tipping Policy**
- 2. Scrutiny Committee supports the implementation of the Flood Protection Policy**

ATTACHMENT:            Y  
FILE REFERENCE:  
SOURCE DOCUMENT:

# BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Fly Tipping Policy

April 2011



**This Policy addresses the following Corporate Aims (show those which are appropriate to the policy only):**



COMMUNITY  
SAFETY



CUSTOMER  
SERVICES



ENVIRONMENT



REGENERATION



SOCIAL INCLUSION



STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

## **Bolsover District Council Equalities Statement**

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and in all the services provided to all sections of the community.

- The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination in compliance with the Equality Strategy.
- The Council also has due regard to eliminate racial discrimination and to proactively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups when performing its functions.

This document is available in large print and other formats from any of the Council offices or by contacting the Chief Executives Directorate on 01246 242323. Please bear in mind we will need a few days to arrange this facility.

If you need help to read this document please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our Equality and Improvement Officer can be contacted via [Email](#) or by telephoning 01246 242407.

Minicom: 01246 242450

Fax: 01246 242423

## CONTROL SHEET

<b>Details of Document</b>	<b>Comments / Confirmation</b>
Title	Fly Tipping Policy
Document type – i.e. draft or final version	Draft v3. 10 February 2011
Location of Policy	L:\Neighbourhoods\Community and Street Services\COG\Policies\Draft\Fly tpping Policy v3 100211.doc
Author of Policy	A. Lowery, Street Services Manager
Member route for Approval & Cabinet Member concerned	Scrutiny; Executive; D. Kelly, Environment Portfolio
Date Risk Assessment completed	
Date Equality Impact Assessment approved	15 November 2010
Partnership Involvement (if applicable)	N/A
Date added to the Forward Plan	N/A
Policy Approved by	
Date Approved	
Policy Review Date	April 2012
Date forwarded to CSPD (to include on Intranet and Internet if applicable to the public)	



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## 1. Introduction

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste and is a crime. All kinds of waste are fly-tipped, the most common being household waste. Other wastes that are fly-tipped include appliances like fridges and washing machines, waste from building and demolition work, animal carcasses, vehicle parts and tyres. Hazardous wastes such as oil, asbestos sheeting and chemicals are also dumped illegally. The types of land most commonly affected by fly-tipping include land near to public waste tips, roadsides and private land, particularly on the outskirts of urban areas, in back alleys and on derelict land.

The Government has introduced a range of measures aimed at tackling fly-tipping, including the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (CNEA) which gives regulators more powers to tackle fly-tipping and the courts the ability to impose tougher penalties.

The Council and the Environment Agency have powers and duties that largely complement each other in contributing towards the protection of the environment and enhancing the quality of life of local communities. Together, the Council and the Environment Agency should endeavour to ensure that the full range of fly-tipping on public and private land is effectively dealt with.

## 2. Scope

Any land or highway within the geographical boundaries of the Bolsover District Council area affected by the illegal deposit of waste. Public land includes roads, pavements, council owned land, parks, recreation areas, car parks and lay-bys.

## 3. Principles

### **Community Safety - ensuring that communities are safe and secure.**

To tackle anti-social behaviour and its causes. Illegal waste activities, such as fly-tipping, unregistered waste carriers, unauthorised transfer stations, landfill sites and other illegal waste activities are a criminal offence and are anti social, tackling these offences helps people feel safer and secure.

### **Customer Focused Services - providing excellent customer focused services.**

To improve the quality and consistency of services received by customers. The Policy gives clear understanding to customers, Councillors and employees on the Councils responsibilities and what actions it will take in dealing with fly tipped waste.

### **Environment - promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment**

To protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.

Fly-tipping reduces the quality and enjoyment of the environment and it can begin a spiral of decline in local environmental quality. It can cause serious pollution of the environment.

### **Regeneration - developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities**

To contribute to improving the health of the district.

Fly-tipping also reduces the quality of life and can be a risk to human health and may harm wildlife and farm animals and can contaminate water courses.

### **Strategic Organisational Development - continually improving our organisation**

To continue to monitor, review and improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services.

Through raising awareness, education, use of Duty of Care and by ensuring better prevention and detection of fly tipping and other forms of illegal waste dumping. The Council is of the firm belief that more effort spent on these aspects will mean less needs to be spent on clear-ups and enforcement action which will result in cost savings.

## **4. Policy Statement**

The Council will investigate and take appropriate enforcement action, in accordance with its enforcement policies, against:

- fly-tipping of quantities of waste up to and including a single tipper load of waste deposited at one time (i.e. up to approximately 20m<sup>3</sup> in a single deposit)
- accumulations of waste from several small-scale fly-tipping incidents
- householders abandoning or dumping waste
- waste management operations that do not have the appropriate planning consent
- waste producers not complying with their Duty of Care
- waste producers who illegally dump or abandon their waste
- unregistered waste carriers and brokers (for example through organised vehicle stop checks)

The Council will investigate and take appropriate enforcement action with regard to:

- Illegal dumping and fly-tipping of waste on public land including a road or other public highway.
- Illegally dumped or abandoned hazardous wastes other than those which the Environment Agency deals with.

- Fly-tipped waste (including animal carcasses or remains) on private land or in watercourses that is giving rise to an adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbourhood or that is impeding the flow of water such as to give rise to an actual or imminent threat of a significant flood risk from an Ordinary Watercourse.
- Waste on domestic gardens which are detrimental to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

The Council will:

- Ensure waste management facilities are subject to appropriate planning approval and will carry out enforcement action against activities without such approvals.
- Ensure adequate collection arrangements for household refuse are in place including well-publicised arrangements for collecting bulky items. In particular, the Council will ensure adequate arrangements are in place for the collection of waste from flats above shops and from houses in multiple-occupancy. (For example, so that the waste is not placed on the street prior to refuse collection day in such a way as to be seen by the public as fly-tipping as this can attract other dumping and make the area look run down and dirty).
- Where fly-tipping on private land has an adverse effect on the environment, take steps to ensure that the waste is removed, appropriate enforcement action is taken and costs recharged wherever possible, in accordance with the Council's enforcement policies.
- Advise landowners or their representative of suitable measures to deter further fly-tipping and may get involved in the investigation of repeated incidents of fly-tipping to prevent further occurrences – possibly through partnership working with landowners, occupiers of land and the Environment Agency.

The Council will also:

- Aim to remove fly-tipped waste as quickly as possible to maintain the cleanliness of the area, discourage further fly-tipping at the same location and prevent waste causing pollution or harm to health. This will generally be within 24 hours of being able to remove the waste.

Enter data, regarding incidents of fly tipping and the number of enforcement actions taken, on to the national DEFRA *Flycapture* database on a monthly basis.

## **5. Responsibility for Implementing**

Community & Street Services – Investigation, Education, Enforcement & Removal

Contact Centre - To handle customer calls 01246 242424

Environmental Health – Investigation, Education, Enforcement, DEFRA Flycapture returns.

Planning – Investigation, Enforcement

## **6. The Environment Agency**

The Agency is a national organisation with a regional and local presence. As such it is well placed when tackling illegal waste activities to act across geographical boundaries that may present more of a difficulty for the Council. The Agency has the capability to respond to the most serious incidents reported to its hot-line (0800 80 70 60) “out of hours” and will report non-serious incidents to the Council on the following working day.

In general, the Agency will focus its resources on investigating and taking appropriate enforcement action against large-scale illegal dumping of waste, organised criminal involvement in waste crime and the dumping of certain special and hazardous wastes.

The Agency regulates much of the waste management industry and major waste producing industries. It maintains a register of waste management activities that are “exempt” from requiring a licence or permit and it issues appropriate licenses, permits or authorisations to a range of waste managers including carriers and brokers of waste and those whose business it is to recycle or dispose of waste. The Agency will monitor and inspect waste management activities’, including carrying out enforcement action against both breaches of authorisations and illegal activities in line with its published Enforcement and Prosecution Policy and its published Customer Charter.

The Environment Agency will normally investigate and take appropriate enforcement action against:

- illegal waste activities such as illegal transfer stations and un-permitted landfill sites
- large-scale fly-tipping i.e. tipping of more than a lorry load (more than approximately 20m<sup>3</sup>)
- illegal dumping of hazardous waste in drums or other containers with a capacity of 75 litres or greater
- unregistered waste carriers and brokers including those identified through national and local stop exercises

- registered waste carriers and brokers that commit a relevant offence (e.g. those specified in the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 and in the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 – as amended)

The Environment Agency will also normally investigate, arrange for the removal of and take appropriate enforcement action with regard to:

- waste (including animal carcasses or remains) dumped in Controlled Waters that is giving rise to an actual or an imminent threat of water pollution
- waste (including animal carcasses or remains) that is impeding the flow of water such as to give rise to an actual or imminent threat of a significant flood risk in a Main River
- any waste that is dumped in a way that is giving rise to an imminent threat to human health or of serious harm to the environment

Where the problems identified are not “actual or imminent” the Agency may intervene where to do so will have significant benefits such as preventing future problems arising.

## **7. Glossary of Terms, if applicable**

**Main Rivers** are watercourses designated as such on **main river** maps (held by the Environment Agency) and are generally the larger arterial watercourses

# BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Flood Protection Policy

April 2011



**This Policy addresses the following Corporate Aims (show those which are appropriate to the policy only):**



COMMUNITY  
SAFETY



COUNCIL  
SERVICES



ENVIRONMENT



REGENERATION



SOCIAL INCLUSION



STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

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## CONTROL SHEET

<b>Details of Document</b>	<b>Comments / Confirmation</b>
Title	Flood Protection Policy
Document type – i.e. draft or final version	Draft v2. 10 February 2011
Location of Policy	L:\Neighbourhoods\Community and Street Services\COG\Policies\Draft\Flood Protection Policy v2 100211.doc
Author of Policy	A. Lowery, Street Services Manager
Member route for Approval & Cabinet Member concerned	Scrutiny; Executive; D. Kelly, Environment Portfolio
Date Risk Assessment completed	
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# 1. Introduction




The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. The operational responsibility for delivering the service falls to the 'operating authorities'. These are:

- Environment Agency
- Local authorities
- Internal drainage boards (Water Companies).

From these the Environment Agency has a general duty over all matters relating to flood defence and is also responsible for flood forecasting and warning arrangements.

The Environment Agency is responsible for issuing flood warnings in this country.

If flooding is forecast the warning is issued using these three codes:

Code	What it means	When it's used	What to do
<b>Flood Alert</b>  FLOOD ALERT	Flooding is possible. Be prepared.	Two hours to two days in advance of flooding.	Be prepared to act on your flood plan. Prepare a flood kit of essential items. Monitor local water levels and the flood forecast on our website
<b>Flood Warning</b>  FLOOD WARNING	Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.	Half an hour to one day in advance of flooding.	Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place. Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so. Put flood protection equipment in place.
<b>Severe Flood Warning</b>  SEVERE FLOOD WARNING	Severe flooding. Danger to life.	When flooding poses a significant threat to life.	Stay in a safe place with a means of escape. Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home. Co-operate with the emergency services. Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.
<b>Warnings no longer in force</b>	No further flooding is currently	When river or sea conditions begin to return to	Be careful. Flood water may still be around for several days. If you've been flooded, ring your

expected normal.  
in your area.

insurance company as soon as possible.

The Environment Agency inspects flood defences, main rivers and other watercourses and makes a report to DEFRA about flood risk.

According to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency, approximately 2.3 million properties are at risk of flooding across the UK and this is set to increase.

Real-time flood warnings and advice is available from the Environment Agency's Floodline on 0845 988 1188. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They provide information on which agencies have responsibility for protecting and responding to flooding in Derbyshire.

The information is provided from the Derbyshire Flood Contingency Plan and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

## **2. Scope**

In an emergency it is mainly down to Derbyshire County Council (DCC), the other councils (including Bolsover District Council (BDC)) and the emergency services to respond.

Where flooding is particularly severe the armed forces may be called in to help.

Along with the other councils DCC will co-ordinate evacuation, provide emergency accommodation and other services.

## **3. Principles**

This policy contributes to the following Corporate Plan aims and targets.

### **Customer Focused Services - providing excellent customer focused services**

To improve the quality and consistency of services received by customers

### **Environment - promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment**

To protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.

## **4. Policy Statement**

Under our Emergency Planning responsibilities we will assist DCC in providing sand bags for the purpose of preventing flood waters from entering properties. This is only in respect of river and weather type flash floods. It does not apply to burst pipes or sewers.

Flood protection is not the District Councils responsibility. However, we realise the need to provide assistance in emergency situations and as such will respond to requests for sand bags when;

- Our Emergency Plan has been implemented and/or
- There is a real and imminent threat of flood water entering a domestic property.

If flooding is widespread the Council may not be able to provide sandbags or assistance to all properties at risk in time to prevent damage and accepts no liability.

We will not provide sand bags in the following circumstances;

- To prevent the flooding of gardens and landscaped areas
- To prevent the flooding of drive ways and paths
- To prevent the flooding of sheds and garages.

The Environment Agency is responsible for securing flood defences and operating barriers and sluices where necessary. They will also try to help with the emergency response, perhaps by providing spare sandbags that are not needed for their own defences.

## **5. Responsibility**

### **Environment Agency**

In England and Wales, the Environment Agency is responsible for building, maintaining and operating flood defences and for issuing flood warnings to the public, other flood responding organisations and the media.

### **County Council**

**DCC** is responsible for the following in an emergency:

- Prepare contingency plans.
- Assist in the provision of emergency care for those who have been evacuated or those affected by flooding but remaining in their home.
- Assist with flood alleviation such as issuing sandbags, clearance of blocked high-way culverts, dealing with flooded roads and traffic diversions.
- Co-ordinate the local authority and voluntary organisations response.

- Arrange for the provision of equipment, information, personnel and expertise to the emergency services.
- Implement additional supporting plans e.g. emergency, media, welfare, mass fatalities.

You can find out more about how DCC plan for and deal with emergencies affecting Derbyshire on their website emergency planning pages, [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)

## **District Council**

Bolsover District Council has the following responsibility in an emergency:

- Preparing contingency plans.
- Assist in the provision of emergency care for those who have been evacuated or those affected by flooding but remaining in their home.
- Assist with flood alleviation.
- Provide equipment, information, personnel and expertise to the emergency services.
- Provide emergency environmental health advice for actions relating to environmental problems caused by flooding.
- Consider applying for Government funding.
- Provide information to the public.

## **Town and Parish Councils**

Town and parish councils have the following responsibilities:

- Preparing contingency plans.
- Assist in the provision of emergency care for those who have been evacuated or those affected by flooding but remaining in their home.
- Assist with flood alleviation.
- Inform other bodies/authorities of situation in Parish.

## **Home Owners**

It is your responsibility as a homeowner to take steps to protect your property against flooding although we will act as quickly as possible in an emergency. You should be prepared and think about measures you can take to reduce potential damage from flooding.

The Environment Agency provides lots of information on preparing for a flood including 'kite-marked' flood prevention products for the protection of individual properties.

## **Sandbags**

You should consider keeping a supply of sandbags if your property is liable to flooding.

Sandbags are usually available from builders merchants, DIY stores or by looking in the local yellow pages.

A few sandbags stored in your garage or shed could prove to be a sensible investment and needn't be costly.

## **In an emergency**

Although you are responsible for protecting your own property against the risk of flooding we respond to flooding emergencies as soon as we can.

The trouble is, when problems are widespread this can't always be in time to prevent damage.

Sandbags can be requested during flooding emergencies by contacting the emergency planning team.

## **Derbyshire County Council**

Office hours: Tel: 01629 585394

Out of hours: via Call Derbyshire telephone 08 456 058058 (lo-call).

## **Bolsover District Council**

Tel: 01246 242424

## **Appendix A – Guidance for Household**

### **What types of flood risk could affect a property?**

There are several different types of flooding which can affect your home and this is why it's important to ensure you have sufficiently assessed the potential risk to your property by looking at flood risk in a wider perspective.

The following information describes the different types of flooding which may affect your home

#### **Surface Water (Pluvial) Flooding**

This type of flooding is caused because the volume of water falling or flowing onto the ground overwhelms existing drainage systems. A major contributor of the severe 2007 floods, such flooding is usually short lived and associated with heavy downpours of rain. Often there is limited advance notice due to the intense nature of water flow needed to create such flooding. However weather forecasts from the Met Office can give a good generalised indication of the flood risk.

Most highway drainage systems are designed to deal with certain frequencies of storm and rainfall intensity. Flooding can be caused by the sheer volume of water often caused by extreme rainfall activity or indicate a blockage or maintenance problem with the system.

Any flooding should be reported so that the risk can be dealt with and the system checked for adequacy.

#### **Fluvial Flooding**

Fluvial flooding occurs when rivers overflow and burst their banks due to high or intense rainfall.

Refer to the Environment Agency and Met office websites for flood risk indications.

Engineering solutions that can be put in place to mitigate the impact of this type of flooding are limited simply because of the huge volumes of water involved and because it is not contained or channelled.

#### **Groundwater Flooding**

Groundwater flooding can be predicted in advance by the Environment Agency who monitors aquifer levels throughout the year.

This is the most problematic type of flooding in many areas. It is different from surface water flooding caused directly by very high levels of rainfall. Where the geology of an area is predominantly chalk (which contains layers of



water-bearing rock, clay, or sand) aquifers may be present. There is a natural cycle in which the aquifers are filled with rain water in the winter and discharged into chalk streams.

When the aquifers are filled to overflowing in the winter, natural springs and winterbournes are activated (winterbournes are streams or rivers that are dry in the summer months). Exceptional periods of rain can cause groundwater flooding from springs and winterbournes which inundate roads and overwhelm drainage systems. This type of flooding can last for weeks or months. An early indication of groundwater flooding is often when property cellars start to fill with water.

### **What to do if a flood happens**

Taking the right action before and when a flood occurs can be the difference between serious and minimal damage to your property and health. The following advice provided by the Environment Agency offers key steps to take when a flood arrives in your area.

### **What to do when you hear a Flood Warning**

- Listen out for further flood information on radio and TV or visit our website.
- Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other items to safety.
- Alert your neighbours, particularly the elderly.
- Put any flood protection products or equipment in place – but make sure your property is ventilated. Plug sinks/baths.
- Be ready to turn off gas and electricity. Unplug electrical items and move them upstairs if possible.
- Cooperate with emergency services and local authorities - you may be evacuated to a rest centre.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. Doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder, especially if the electricity fails.
- It is also worth taking a photo of as many household items as possible, this could be useful for insurance claim purposes.

### **Staying safe in a flood**

- Listen to the local news and to the emergency services who will advise if evacuation is necessary and check on elderly relatives and make sure they are ok.
- Floods can kill. Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater - six inches of fast flowing water can knock you over and two feet of water will float your car. Manhole covers may have come off and there may be other hazards you can't see.
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water - you may get swept away or be struck by an object in the water.

- Don't walk on sea defences, riverbanks or cross river bridges. 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.
- Be aware of contaminated water as there is potential for sewage to mix with flood water, this could provide health risks to those who come into contact with it.

## **Protecting your home from flooding**

Although the risk of flooding is increasing, there are measures you can take to protect your home prior to a flood turning up at your doorstep. There are a number of companies who offer products to protect your home from a variety of the major risks. This page offers you an insight into some of the key damage prevention tools which are available

### **Flood barriers**

Flood barriers come in many different shapes and forms. The main principle is to block flood entry into the property itself, via doors and other points of entry such as air vents. Alternatively, it may be possible to block off an area surrounding the property, stopping the flood flow in the process. Door barriers have minimal aesthetic impact and are now advanced enough to withstand severe flooding and ensure a waterproof seal on the entrances to your home.

### **Protecting electrics**

Flooding of electrics can cause thousands of pounds worth of damage. However, there are steps which can be taken to protect the electrics within your home. First, the most obvious step to take is to switch off all electrical items and put any electrical equipment in a raised position. In addition, plug covers and housing for any exposed electrics can be purchased to ensure electrical access routes are blocked.

### **Flood water pumps**

A variety of water pumps are now available and choosing one depends on how much water would need to be pumped. Motorised petrol pumps can pump large amounts of water at incredibly fast speeds. These are often quite cumbersome and suited to severe flooding scenarios where speed is of the essence. Alternatively, you can obtain smaller electrical pumps which can be in place within a flood area. Such a pump obviously requires you to have an electricity source which has not been affected by flood – if you are ever unsure, then call an electrician for confirmation.

### **Further Information**

For further information on flood prevention products, please visit [www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk) where you will find a link to the Blue Pages, which includes contact details for a number of companies and further advice on how your home can be protected.

## **Who helps when a flood occurs?**

**Flooding is a growing risk and should be considered by all homeowners. If you live in one of the 2.3 million properties at risk of flooding across England and Wales (source: Environment Agency and Defra), your home or business is more likely to be flooded than it is to catch fire. Most people know who to contact in the event of a fire but would you and your family know who to speak to when a flood risk is apparent?**

The following offers a summary of the responsibilities associated with organisations that are on hand before, during and after a flood so you know who to contact to obtain specific information.

### **The Environment Agency**

In England and Wales, the Environment Agency is responsible for building, maintaining and operating flood defences and for issuing flood warnings to the public, other flood responding organisations and the media.

The Environment Agency also provides the Floodline **0845 988 1188** service. You can listen to recorded flood warning information for your area or speak to an operator for advice 24 hours a day.

### **The Police**

When a major flood incident occurs the Police coordinate the emergency services and help with the evacuation of people from their homes where necessary.

### **The Fire & Rescue Service**

- Main objective is to save lives and evacuate people to safety.
- Some local services provide water pumping to remove flood water.

### **The Citizens Advice Bureau**

- In some circumstances the Citizens Advice Bureau can issue advice on how to obtain money in an emergency and what action to take around insurance.
- Contact information on your local Bureau can be found in the phone book or on the Citizens Advice Bureau website.

### **Local Authorities**

- Work with the police, fire and rescue services and the Environment Agency to coordinate responses during severe flooding.
- Issue advice to the local area about the incident and what action to take.

- Organise rest centres for people evacuated from their homes and set up temporary shelters/accommodation for those people who have nowhere else they can go to.
- Address road closures and disruption to social services.
- Where resource and material are available, they may supply sandbags and/or other preventative materials.

**If you are planning on carrying out work to renovate or improve your home, this page offers advice to protect your property and reduce the impact of any future flooding.**

**The below points are worth considering to prevent water from entering your property:**

- Once a risk has been identified to a property, it may be worth considering flood protection barriers.
- Before you make any changes to your home, it is important to obtain advice from a surveyor or building professional with experience of flood related issues.
- Perform regular assessments of the condition of your home, checking for cracks or gaps beginning to form between bricks.
- If your area is known to be at risk of flooding, some councils may be able to offer grants to help with protecting your home.
- Ensure that any development to the surroundings of your property takes into consideration water run-off routes.
- To find out more about flood prevention products, visit the 'Blue Pages' directory on [www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk)

**The following steps could help you reduce the cost and clear up time after a flood:**

- Non-return valves in drainage pipes can prevent the sewage backing up into the house.
- Install electrical sockets higher up walls, taking into consideration the previous level of flooding.
- Gaps which surround access points into the home should be checked, i.e. dishwasher and sink pipes.
- Ensure waterproof door and window frames are installed, providing a sealant to prevent future flooding.
- The use of waterproof paint both internally and externally adds protection to walls themselves and also decreases the risk to paintwork.
- The installation of closed cell insulation within wall cavities next to existing mineral insulation will decrease the risk of flood penetration.
- For older properties, it is worth seeking advice from SPAB (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings): [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk).

It is also worth checking with your insurance company whether any of the above measures may lead to lower premiums.

### **Where do I find flood risk information?**

There are a number of sources of flood risk information such as the **Environment Agency's** website and the Floodline flood alert service on **0845 988 1188**. This free service provides flood warnings direct to you by telephone, mobile, email, SMS text message, fax or pager. In addition to signing up for warnings, you can get simple advice on what to do before, during and after a flood.