



Cornwall Community  
**Flood Forum**

Help and advice  
to be prepared  
and stay safe



## Dear Householder or Business Proprietor

Many factors ranging from climate change to the historical settlement patterns in Cornwall and the impact of man made changes to our landscape over the centuries all conspire to make flooding a very real threat to about 8,000 households and businesses within our beautiful county. Whilst much is done to mitigate the likelihood of flooding, the sheer scale of the challenge makes it impossible to prevent altogether. It is therefore incumbent on everyone to do what they can to ensure their homes and businesses are as resilient as possible to the risk and impact of flooding.

The Cornwall Community Flood Forum (CCFF) is an association of Town and Parish Councils,

community groups and businesses. It is a genuine community-led initiative whose aims are to:

- Support communities in becoming better prepared
- Raise flood awareness within Cornwall
- Promote a partnership approach to flood risk management and community engagement

I hope that you will find this publication useful.



**Councillor Roy Taylor**  
Chairman, Cornwall Community Flood Forum

Cornwall Community Flood Forum is supported by:



Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs



## Identify your flood risk

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The Environment Agency can provide some indication of whether your property is considered at risk from certain forms of flooding.

### Sign up for flood warnings

Floodline Warnings Direct is a **FREE** service which sends you a direct message when river or tidal flooding is expected and may affect your property. You can receive warnings by telephone, email or SMS text, whichever you prefer.

Call Floodline on **0345 988 1188** or **0845 988 1188**

Typetalk **0845 602 6340**.

Please note that flood warnings are not available for all locations.

## Planning ahead

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During a flood you may have little time to react or prepare. If you live in a flood risk area act now and plan what you would do in a flood. Do not wait until it happens.

You can start by creating a personal, household or business flood plan. This will help you decide what practical actions to take before and during a potential or actual flood. To find out more about flood plans and download templates visit the Environment Agency web site or use the template in this publication.

### Steps to protect property

There are lots of things you can do to prepare your home or business premises, so that if flooding happens, the damage it causes is less extensive and less costly.

Do not wait until a flood happens.  
Start a flood plan now.



## The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency provides practical guidance on how to prepare your property for flooding and the steps you can take to reduce flood damage.

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

**Floodline: 0345 988 1188 or**

**0845 988 1188**

**Incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60**

**(24 hrs)**

## The National Flood Forum

The National Flood Forum suggests a range of options to make your property more flood resilient.

A video guide to flood protection and resilience is available from the National Flood Forum as well as case studies of people who have made their homes or businesses more flood resilient.

The National Flood Forum has compiled a catalogue of flood protection products and providers known as the Blue Pages.

[www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk)

**01299 403055**



## Cornwall Council

Cornwall Council's flooding web pages provide a clear guide to the steps you can take to protect property from flooding.

[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

## Cornwall Community Flood Forum

The Cornwall Community Flood Forum has an interest in all flood related activities within Cornwall. We are guided in particular by the following aims:

- Support communities in becoming better prepared
- Raise flood awareness within Cornwall
- Promote partnership approach to flood risk management and community engagement

[www.cornwallcommunityfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.cornwallcommunityfloodforum.org.uk)

**01726 223627**

 **Find us on Facebook and Twitter**

# Simple steps to stay safe during a flood

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## Be ready

- Put your personal flood plan into action if you have one
- Call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or 0845 988 1188
- Tune into local radio
- Check the three-day flood risk forecast
- Check the weather forecast
- Check road travel information before making a journey

## Gather essentials

- Fill jugs and saucepans with water
- Grab your flood kit if you have prepared one
- Collect blankets, torch, first aid kit, medication and food

## Move items

- Move important documents, personal items, valuables, lightweight belongings upstairs or to high shelves

- Raise large items of furniture, or put them in large bags if you have them
- Move people, outdoor belongings, cars and pets to higher ground

## Prepare your property

- Switch off water, gas and electricity at mains when water is about to enter your home. Do not touch sources of electricity when standing in water
- Fit flood protection products if you have them, e.g. flood boards, airbrick covers, sandbags, and toilet bungs on downstairs toilets
- Put plugs in sinks and baths. Weigh them down with a pillowcase or plastic bag filled with soil
- If you do not have non-return valves fitted, plug water inlet pipes with towels or cloths
- Disconnect equipment that uses water, like washing machines and dishwashers



## Stay out of floodwater

- Avoid walking or driving through flood water: ankle deep fast-flowing water can knock over an adult and knee deep water can move a car
- Fact – a third of flood related death's involve a vehicle
- Be aware that flooding can cause manhole covers to come off
- Keep children and vulnerable people out of floodwater
- Don't walk on sea defences or riverbanks
- Take care or avoid crossing bridges when water levels are high
- Take care crossing culverts as they are dangerous when flooded
- Look out for other hazards such as fallen power lines and trees
- Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch floodwater as it may be contaminated

## Take action in an emergency

- Call 999 if you are in danger, or people have been injured
- Check your vulnerable neighbours to see if they require help
- Move people and pets upstairs or to a higher place with means of escape
- Remain calm

## Evacuate when told

- Follow the advice of the emergency services if they tell you to evacuate - they will take you to an assembly point. From there, you can choose to go to friends/relatives or a centre run by the local council where you will be given food and bedding
  - It's important to go to the assembly point first in order to ensure that you have been accounted for as safe
- Bring clothing, medication, and baby care items
- Bring pets in a secure carrier and pet food
- Tell someone if you intend to stay with friends or relatives instead of the evacuation centre

## Prepare your property for flooding

It's impossible to completely flood-proof a property but there are lots of things you can do to reduce flood damage. If you know your property is in an area that could flood, buy protection equipment and prepare your property well in advance to reduce the risk of flood water getting inside.

### Insurance

If you are having difficulty obtaining insurance by dealing directly with an insurance company's call centre or through one of the comparison sites, speak to local insurance brokers who may be able to obtain cover for you.

### Sandbags

Don't assume that the authorities will provide you with sandbags in a flood emergency! It is the responsibility of property owners to take appropriate action to protect their property from flooding. Contact local DIY Stores and builders' merchants for stocks of bags and sand. Sandbags have traditionally been used as a form of property protection to divert water during a flood due to their cheapness and ease of use:

- Sandbags can help keep water out of a property but they are most effective when you

place plastic sheeting behind them first to form a water-tight layer. Even the use of plastic bin liners can help.

- Sandbags rot very quickly, especially the hessian biodegradable type. They may last only 3 to 4 months. Store them in a dry place. Only fill them or put them outside when you really need them.
- Dispose of sandbags carefully and responsibly. Please do not allow any sand to be washed into drains as this will cause blocking (and potentially flooding). Used sand bags may become contaminated, for example by sewage in flood water.
- Sandbags can be difficult to get when demand is high, when flooding has occurred or is expected – **think ahead**. Think what else you may have around your house or garden that may do the job equally well.
  - In an emergency you can use alternatives such as pillow cases or refuse sacks and fill them with garden soil.
- The unpredictable nature of flooding makes it impossible for Cornwall Council to distribute sandbags before a flood occurs.



## Your personal flood plan

**Start preparing today before a flood happens.**

**Use this checklist as your flood plan.**

### 1 Know who to contact and how

- Agree where you will go and how to contact each other.
- Keep a list with all your important contacts to hand.

### 2 Think about what you can move now

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

### 3 Think about what you would want to move to safety during a flood

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

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### 4 Think about who you could ask for help / who you could offer to help, particularly vulnerable neighbours or relatives, in a flood.

- 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.





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

- Ask your supplier how to do this if you don't know.
- Mark taps or switches with stickers to help you remember.

## 6 Prepare a flood kit of essential items and keep it handy

- 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.

## Flood Warning Service



- ☒ Stay alert
- ☒ Stay vigilant
- ☒ Early precautions

- ☒ Flooding expected
- ☒ Take action
- ☒ Protect yourselves & your property

- ☒ Significant risk to life
- ☒ Significant disruption to communities
- ☒ Protect yourselves



## Useful numbers

### Your important flood numbers.

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

<b>Environment Agency</b> Incident hotline	0800 80 70 60 (24 hrs)
<b>Environment Agency</b> Floodline for advice and guidance	0345 988 1188 or 0845 988 1188
<b>Cornwall Council</b> Flooding or drainage issues on public roads	0300 1234 222
<b>South West Water</b> Water and sewerage emergencies	0844 346 2020
<b>South West Water</b> 24 hour leak emergency line	0800 230 0561
<b>Gas leak / emergency</b>	0800 111 999
<b>Electricity emergency</b>	0800 404 090
<b>Insurance company 24-hour number</b>	
<b>Insurance policy number</b>	
<b>Vulnerable neighbour:</b>	
<b>Work phone numbers</b>	
<b>Doctor's surgery</b>	
<b>Police non emergency</b>	101
<b>Vet / kennel / cattery</b>	
<b>Gas supplier:</b>	
<b>Meter and account numbers</b>	
<b>Electricity supplier:</b>	
<b>Meter and account numbers</b>	





## STAY SAFE FLOOD ADVICE

- Don't put yourself at risk by entering flood water
  - ankle deep fast-flowing water can knock over an adult
  - water that's knee deep can move a car
- Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch floodwater
  - it may be contaminated
- Put your personal flood plan into action if you have one
- Tune into local radio
- Call 999 if you are in danger, or people have been injured
- Check on vulnerable neighbours
- Remain calm

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## WHO TO CALL FLOOD ACTION

### Police, Fire and Ambulance

During any emergency **999**

### Police

Non emergency **101**

### Environment

### Agency

Incident hotline number

**0800 80 70 60**

Floodline for advice  
and guidance

**0345 988 1188** or

**0845 988 1188**

**Gas 0800 111 999**

**Electricity 0800 404 090**

### Cornwall Council

Flooding or drainage issues  
on public roads

**0300 1234 222**

### South West Water

Leak 24 hour emergency line

**0800 230 0561**

Water and sewerage  
emergencies

**0844 346 2020**

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[www.cornwallcommunityfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.cornwallcommunityfloodforum.org.uk)  
[floodforum@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:floodforum@cornwall.gov.uk)



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