



This leaflet was produced by the Environment Agency  
working with Help The Aged

Environment Agency Floodline  
**0845 988 1188**

Environment Agency Floodline Minicom Service  
**0845 602 6340**

Environment Agency Customer Services Line  
**08708 506 506**

Website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)  
E-mail: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Help the Aged produces a range  
of free advice leaflets for older people  
covering financial matters, housing,  
home safety and health.

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# Flooding: be prepared

## a guide for older people










We've all seen pictures of the terrible damage flooding can cause. Research shows that older people find it hard to cope with being flooded. So even if you haven't experienced flooding before it is important to be prepared. This leaflet should help you to plan ahead and reduce the risk to you and your belongings.

## Am I at risk of flooding?

You can find out if your local area is at risk of flooding by contacting the Environment Agency's 24 hour Floodline **0845 988 1188** and selecting option 3 to speak to the operator or by visiting its website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline)

If you are at risk of flooding, you can register to receive flood warning messages for your local area. This service is **FREE**. To register, phone Floodline and speak to the operator (option 3). You can register a member of your family to receive flood warnings on your behalf.

The Environment Agency also issues flood warnings to local authorities, emergency services and local TV and radio stations. There are four different levels of flood warning:

-  **Flood Watch**  **Flooding possible. Be aware! Be prepared! Watch out!**
-  **Flood Warning**  **Flooding expected affecting homes, businesses and main roads. Act now!**
-  **Severe Flood Warning**  **Severe flooding expected. Imminent danger to life and property. Act now!**
-  **All Clear** **An all-clear will be issued when flood watches or warnings are no longer in force. Floodwater levels receding. Check all is safe to return. Seek advice.**



## How do I prepare for a flood?

### Your safety

Your safety is the most important thing. Find out if family or friends can offer you a place to stay when flooding is threatened. If you have a disability contact your local authority social services and ask them how they will help if you are at risk from flooding.

Plan your escape route, particularly if you are in a bungalow. If you live in a house and have window locks, always keep a key upstairs. Find out from your local authority where you would be evacuated to and let family and friends know.

### Useful numbers list

Make a list of useful numbers and keep it in a safe place. It should include:

- **Floodline 0845 988 1188**
- Family and neighbours who can help including people who can look after your pet, if you have one
- Your local authority; look in your phone book
- Your insurance company claim and emergency numbers
- A Corgi registered gas engineer and a trained electrician. Phone Corgi on **0870 401 2300** and the Electrical Contractors Association on **020 7313 4800** for lists of contractors in your area.



**Make sure you're prepared for flooding.**  
By thinking through what you need to do in advance, you will give yourself more time to get help and ensure that you're ready – should the worst happen.

### **Protecting your property and belongings**

Store items of value and important documents, such as birth certificate, passport, financial papers, pension and benefit books upstairs, or if you are in a bungalow as high up as possible. Use waterproof containers or sealed plastic bags. Check with your local authority if anybody can help you with moving furniture and other heavy objects.

If you have pets plan ahead - think about who will look after them and how you will get them there.

### **Insurance**

Check that you are insured. Find out exactly what your insurance company will cover, for example temporary accommodation and if they will arrange clean-up and repair work.

### **Find out how to turn off your gas and electricity**

If this is going to be difficult for you ask your power company if they are able to help. You can get their number from your bill. Remember if your property is flooded you will need to have your gas and electricity supplies and all appliances and flues checked before you can switch the power back on.

### **Prepare a flood kit**

This should be stored where you can easily get to it if your home is flooded and should include:

- A torch
- Blankets and warm clothing
- Waterproofs, including rubber gloves
- A first-aid kit, including a supply of any essential medication
- A list of useful telephone numbers and charged mobile phone if you have one
- A supply of bottled water
- A stock of non-perishable food items
- A portable radio and supply of batteries
- A portable pet carrier for your pet if you have one

Clearing up after a flood can sometimes be as worrying as the actual flood. Make sure you find out about what kind of help is available to you locally.

## After a flood

Unfortunately this worrying time doesn't end when the floodwater goes down. Your home will need to be cleaned, disinfected, repaired and fully dried out. This can take some time and you may have to live in temporary accommodation for a while. If you are disabled your local social services should arrange for temporary accommodation to meet your needs.

Also if you don't have anybody to help with getting your home back to normal your local social services should be able to offer you support.

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible. Get their approval before arranging any clean-up or repairs. They may appoint their own builders. If you have moved into temporary accommodation make sure they have your new contact details.

Beware of bogus trades people taking advantage of the situation. If you need repair work carried out get quotes from several firms or recommendations from friends or neighbours. All Environment Agency staff carry ID cards which you should ask to see before letting them into your house.

Contact the Environment Agency's 24 hour Floodline **0845 988 1188** for their free booklets on dealing with the clean-up and long term flood proofing measures.



## Checklist

Tear off this back page and keep for easy reference.

- Find out if you live in an area at risk from flooding
- Contact Floodline 0845 988 1188 to register for flood warnings
- Make sure you understand the flood warning codes and actions
- Make sure you are properly insured
- Plan your escape route
- Find out if friends and family can offer you a place to stay
- If you have a disability contact your local social services to see how they can help you
- Make a list of useful numbers and prepare a flood kit  
Store them together
- Store important documents and sentimental items in a safe place
- Plan how you will protect your pets
- Find out how to turn off your gas and electricity