

# FLOOD ADVICE

This leaflet is provided to help you prepare for a flood emergency that could affect your lives and property.

Although the chances of you being affected by a flood are low, it is important to be prepared and know what to do to protect your property, yourself and others.

**Keep this leaflet in a safe place.**

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It is worth remembering that it is **your responsibility to protect your property. Start preparing today; don't wait for a flood to happen.**

## **Safeguarding your home:**

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Environment Agency provide the following advice on long term preparations that can help protect your home:

- Make sure your home and its contents are insured!
  - Keep some empty sandbags and sand/earth ready for use. You can buy sand and sandbags at most DIY/garden centres or use pillowcases in an emergency. Stack the sandbags in a brick formation and stamp down bags to plug the gaps.
  - Make sure your gutters are cleaned out regularly.
  - Keep any watercourses, such as ditches or culverts which run across or border your garden, free from blockages and check for bank erosion. Never be tempted to fill them in, to create an extra patch of garden.
  - Keep gullies clear to ensure water can drain away. Gullies on public highways are maintained by Wirral Council. Homeowners are responsible for keeping private gullies clean including their drains.
  - Board the floor of your loft so that possessions can be moved above floodwater levels.
  - Move electrical sockets above anticipated water levels.
  - Buy portable flood barrier products from builder's merchants, which can be fitted for the duration of the flood risk period.
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**While it's impossible to completely flood-proof a property, there are lots of things you can do to reduce the damage flooding can cause.**

### **Temporary flood protection equipment**

Follow manufacturer instructions to put these in place when preparing for a flood.

### **Plastic covers to seal airbricks**

These can stop floodwater coming in through your airbricks and under your floorboards.

### **Sandbags**

Sandbags can be used to protect properties from flooding. Generally they are placed against thresholds, airbricks, or other openings and can be used to create temporary walls at gateways. Sandbags can also be used to create temporary defences, or to extend the height of existing flood defences. Plastic bags or pillowcases filled with soil etc, can be used to provide protection against flooding.

**Note:** Sandbags are effective in diverting shallow flowing water that has somewhere else to go, or deflecting wavelets caused in shallow water by passing vehicles. However, they are **not waterproof** and will not keep floods out of buildings where the water level is higher than the doorstep or any airbricks. The council is unable to provide sandbags to protect individual properties.

### **Floodboards/doors**

These fix to frames around windows and doors. They can be washed, stored and used again. Always remove flood protection equipment once the floodwater has receded as this will help your property to dry out.



## Further steps to protect your property

You can make changes to your property that will make it easier and cheaper to clean up in the event of a flood. These steps may incur costs or changes to your property.

- Lay ceramic tiles on your ground floor and use rugs instead of fitted carpets.
- Raise the height of electrical sockets to 1.5 metres above ground floor level.
- Use lime plaster instead of gypsum on walls.
- Fit stainless steel or plastic kitchens instead of chipboard materials.
- Position any main parts of a heating or ventilation system, like a boiler, upstairs.
- Fit non-return valves to all drains and water inlet pipes.
- Where appropriate, replace wooden window frames and doors with synthetic materials.



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## **Flooding**

You may think your property is not directly at risk, but floods can happen anywhere at anytime. They can be caused by high sea levels, rising ground water levels, burst water mains and run-off from higher levels following sudden heavy rain. Blocked sewers can also lead to flooding.

**Find out if you are at risk of flooding from rivers or sea and whether you are eligible to sign up to the Environment Agency's free Floodline Warnings Direct Service by calling Floodline on tel. 0845 9881188.**

## **Protecting your property**

Members of the public have a responsibility to protect their own properties. If you believe that you are at risk of flooding, then sandbags should be purchased beforehand from a local building suppliers.

Always assume floodwater contains sewage and use rubber gloves when handling affected items.

Keep a check on the weather forecast and look out for severe weather warnings and at the first sign of possible flooding, move your family and valuable items/furniture upstairs.



Wirral Council is working with a number of partners, including the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Emergency Services to prepare for emergencies such as flooding.

## **Responsibilities and who to call in the event of a flood?**

### **- Flooding from main Rivers**

**(e.g Fender, Birkett, etc) and sea**

Environment Agency Floodline 0845 9881 188,  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodnorthwest](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodnorthwest)

### **- Public drains and sewers**

The responsibility for cleansing and maintaining all **public drains and sewers** rests with **United Utilities 0845 746 2200**,  
[www.unitedutilities.co.uk](http://www.unitedutilities.co.uk) or

**Welsh Water 08000853968**,  
[www.dwrcymru.co.uk](http://www.dwrcymru.co.uk)

### **- Flooding from private drains, land drains and watercourses**

The land owner.

### **- Highway flooding**

Wirral Council 0151 606 2004,  
[www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

Other useful contacts

The Met Office 0870 900 0100  
[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)