

1. Appendix D – General public advice

Before a flood

Prepare a flood kit:

Pack a small bag with essential belongings and include warm clothes, torch (check batteries), radio (wind-up or battery powered), food, water, other drink, mobile phone (input useful numbers in advance), any medicines that you may need to take, any important documents that you have and a first-aid kit. Keep this bag easily accessible.

- Collect personal belongings together, including insurance and bank details and essential telephone numbers, and keep them in a waterproof bag.
- Move people, pets, valuables and sentimental items upstairs or to a high place downstairs.
- Keep a separate list of useful telephone numbers to hand (this should include your local council, your insurance company and **Floodline – 0845 988 1188**).
- Find out where and how to turn off your gas and electricity. Ensure that you switch it off before evacuating your home if flooding is imminent.
- If possible, move electrical equipment and furniture upstairs.
- Any furniture that you cannot move upstairs, try to raise well off the floor.
- Alert neighbours and assist the elderly, infirm and those with small children.
- Block doorways and air bricks.
- Avoid walking and driving through floodwater; there could be hidden hazards.
- Keep up to date with local radio for further information and announcements and via **Floodline 0845 988 1188**.

During a flood

- Continue to listen to situation updates on your local radio and via **Floodline 0845 988 1188**.
- Keep dry and out of floodwater if possible
- Stay in your property, if safe to do so, until the emergency services tell you to do otherwise or the floodwater has receded.
- Do not walk or drive through flowing floodwater.
- If it is necessary to walk through shallow floodwater, take care for hidden holes, obstacles or other hazards.
- Do not walk on river banks or sea defences or cross bridges over torrential rivers.
- Avoid contact with floodwater and wash any exposed parts before handling food or attending to wounds.
- If possible, move electrical equipment and furniture upstairs.

If evacuation becomes necessary

- Stay calm and do not panic.
- Police officers or other officials (or both) will try to visit all properties at risk, to tell you if you need to evacuate.
- If road conditions permit, move vehicles to unaffected areas and ask friends/family if you can share their parking facilities.
- You will hear about your evacuation point for transport and the location of the reception centre either verbally or by a leaflet.
- Try to check that any elderly/vulnerable family members or neighbours know about the evacuation.
- Listen to the advice of the authorities and follow any instructions to leave a property.

After a flood/returning home

- Contact your insurers as soon as possible and follow their advice. Most insurers have a 24-hour helpline. Do not throw away damaged goods until your insurer has authorised you to do so. It is a good idea to take photographs of the damage.
- Check the safety of electricity and gas before use. A qualified electrician needs to check any electrical equipment and circuits that have been exposed to floodwater.
- Avoid contact with any remaining floodwater or items that have had contact with floodwater unless wearing protective gloves/clothing.
- Boil all tap water until it is declared safe by the water-supply company.
- Wash your and your children's hands frequently with bottled water if your supply has not been declared fit for use. Disinfect any children's toys.
- Dispose of any contaminated food, including tinned, defrosted and packaged foods that have been exposed to floodwater.
- Seek medical assistance if any health issues appear, especially flu-like symptoms.
- Ventilate your property but keep security in mind.
- Do not throw rubbish and furniture outdoors; wait for an organised collection.
- During these hard times, bogus or cowboy builders and traders often offer their services. Make sure you get a written quotation that is on letter-headed paper with a landline contact number and address.