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Rivers and flooding

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Flooding

A river floods when the water normally flowing in the channel overflows its banks and spreads out onto the surrounding land. This causes major problems for people living close to the river.

Why do rivers flood?

A variety of factors can increase the likelihood of flooding.



Physical causes of flooding:

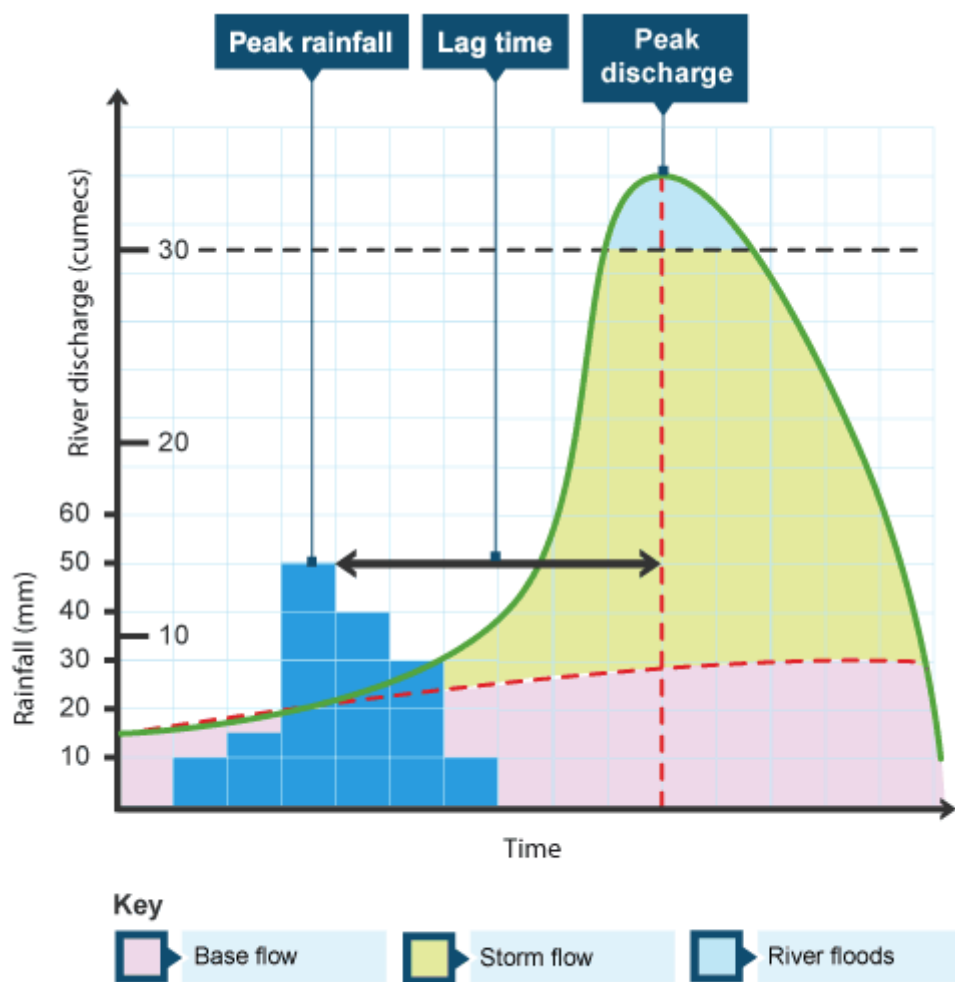
- heavy rainfall
- long periods of rain
- snowmelt
- steep slopes
- impermeable* rock (doesn't allow water through)
- very wet, saturated soils
- compacted* or dry soil

Human factors increasing flood risk:

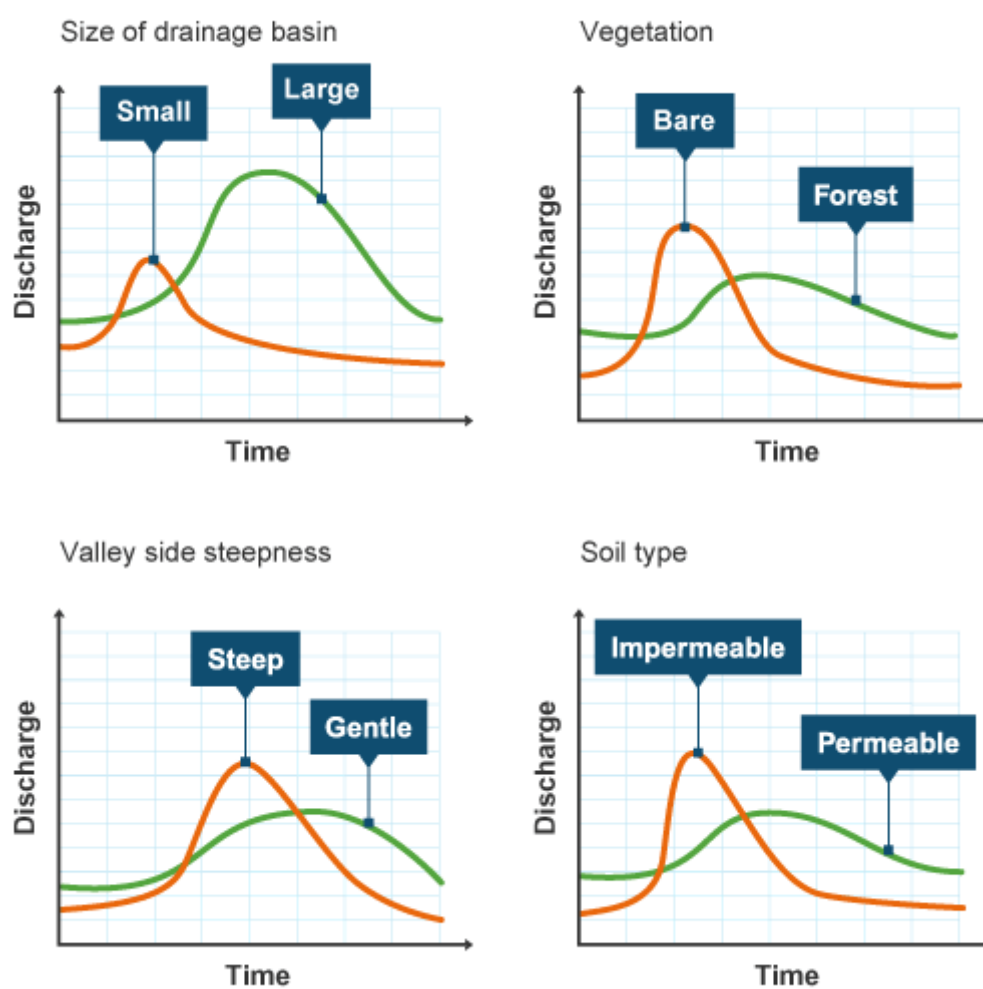
- urbanisation*, because towns and cities have more impermeable surfaces
- deforestation*, because removing trees reduces the amount of water *intercepted* and increases *run-off*

Storm hydrograph

A storm hydrograph is a graph to show how and when a rainfall event affects the discharge of a river.



The amount and intensity of the rainfall is not the only factor influencing the shape of the hydrograph. Below are other influences:



More from Rivers and flooding :

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