

# Floods in the UK: advice on staying safe and protecting your home

Advice for before, during and after a flood.

## Flooding in the UK

This page is [available in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

Flooding can pose a danger to yourself, your family, and your property. Millions of people in the UK live and work in areas at risk of flooding.

Some people will have experienced flooding before and know they live in flood-prone areas. But it's important to remember flash flooding can happen in other areas and take you by surprise. Flash floods are unpredictable and it's a good idea to think about what actions we can take to be prepared.

Take these steps to help keep everyone safe.



- Flood warnings and alerts
- How to prepare for a flood
- What to do during a flood
- What to do after a flood
- Support if you're struggling after a flood

## How to prepare for a flood

### Before a flood warning

Make sure you can download flood warnings:

**Familiarise yourself** with the **government's alert systems**

**Make an evacuation plan** for your family **and pets**. Work out how you'll take medication and other essentials with you.

**Prepare an emergency kit** in case you need to leave quickly. Use our **guide** to prepare your emergency kit. Your kit could contain a mobile phone charger, medication, drinking water, emergency contact and support numbers, something to wear, and waterproof clothing.

**Check your home insurance policy.** Make sure you have a policy that meets your coverage needs for potential flood damage inside your home. See if you are **eligible for support with flood insurance**

See if you're **at risk of flooding in your area**

If you live in an area at risk of flooding, **let your neighbours know**, especially those that are elderly or vulnerable, and help them to prepare too.

Floods can pose a danger to your health. You can take a **Red Cross first aid course**, or download our free **First Aid apps**, for adults and children to help prepare.

For more information about the health risks related to flooding read **Public Health England's advice and guidance**.

## After a flood warning

**Follow the advice** on your British Red Cross app or government alert

**Shut and lock all windows and doors** but ensure you have an easily accessible escape route from the property. This will protect your property and may reduce the volume of floodwater entering the building.

**Take photographs around your home.** This may help with insurance claims.

**Move sentimental and important items/documents** upstairs.

**Move vehicles** to higher ground so they won't be caught in rising floodwater.

## What to do during a flood

If the flood is posing a threat to your safety, **call the emergency services immediately.**

**Don't walk, swim, or drive through floodwater.** Six inches of fast-flowing water can knock you over. Two feet of water can float a car.

**Don't walk on sea defences or riverbanks.**

**Avoid contact with floodwater.** It may be contaminated with sewage. If you're exposed, wash your hands and clothes thoroughly in clean water.

**Don't allow children to play in or near floodwater.**

More advice about what to do during a flood and how to stay safe can be found on the **National Flood Forum** (Wales, England, and Northern Ireland) or **Scottish Flood Forum** (Scotland) websites.

## Need to leave your home and have nowhere to stay?

Your local council will help. Initially, you may be housed in an emergency shelter. But if you cannot return home for a long period, your council can help you find something more suitable. **Find the website for your local council.**

If you need to evacuate, **turn off the main power before you leave.** You can be electrocuted in floodwater if the power remains switched on.

**Take all pets with you** when you leave so they aren't trapped by rising water.

## After a flood

**Dispose of any food** that may have been in floodwater.

**Boil tap water or use bottled water** until supplies are declared safe.

Flooding is a stressful experience. You can **find information on crisis support services by phoning 111** (NHS 111 number).

Follow the UK government's advice on **how to keep safe while cleaning up after a flood.**

## More support

Check the **National Flood Forum**

Speak to a Floodline adviser by calling 0345 988 1188.

Find further advice on the following websites:

**the Environment Agency (England)**

**Natural Resources Wales**

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency**

**Northern Ireland Direct**

Follow the **UK Government's advice on flooding**, the **dangers of flash flooding**, and how **groundwater flooding may affect you**.

Download and read the Environment Agency's **leaflet on what to do before, during and after a flood**.

## If you're struggling to cope after a flood

For some people the experience of flooding can be stressful. The effects of flooding can be felt for months and years after.

We have trained staff and volunteers who can help if you'd like to talk about any difficulties you're having.

Our team members can:

- offer emotional support as a friendly and understanding listener

- suggest organisations which may be able to help you

- discuss steps you can take to start or continue your recovery

The team is unable to offer financial assistance.

Call the support line on **0808 196 3651**.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 10am to 12 midday.

Between 10am and 5pm you can also request a call-back.

Alternatively, you can use our **list of support organisations**.

## Floods: causes and risks

Understand the causes of flooding in the UK, why it is a problem for millions across the country, and what we do to help.



### Understanding flooding in the UK

The risk of flooding in the UK is growing. Find out why it's such a problem and who it will affect in the future.



## > Impact of flooding



### Red Cross support during flooding

From sandbags to warm shelter: How the British Red Cross helps during a flood in the UK.

## > Flooding support

## Help in an emergency



## UK emergency response

We help people in the UK when an emergency happens.

➤ [See the help we give](#)



## Volunteer to help in emergencies



In an emergency you'll be there to help when someone needs it most.

➤ **Find out how to volunteer**



## How to keep warm in winter

When cold temperatures hit, it's important to keep warm. Use our cost-effective tips this winter to make sure you and your home stay cosy.

➤ **Tips for keeping warm in winter**



## Storms and thunderstorms advice

Get useful information and emotional support if you are affected by a storm or thunderstorm.

### > Get support during a storm

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