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What preparations can I
make to protect myself
from flooding?
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Preparation

The reality of having your home flooded is difficult to understand unless you have been through the experience – you can face months away from home while it is restored. A flood can also mean the prospect of throwing away the downstairs contents of your home and an immense amount of disruption to normal family life.

The emotional impact can be equally devastating. Coping with the unfamiliar tasks of sorting out the restoration of your home whilst living in temporary accommodation, plus worrying about the possible impact on house prices and the risk of future flooding all add to the stress of the situation.

Having your home or business flooded is an appalling experience, but the distress and disruption can be limited if you are prepared. Having a plan can help – knowing who is going to do what and where to turn for help can really calm the crisis.

Useful tips

- Make a list of useful telephone numbers – the claims dept of your insurance company, gas, electric, local authority etc, your landlord if applicable and keep it in a safe place – preferably upstairs.
- Make a list of vital items you will need should you be flooded – some warm clothes, essential toiletries, any medication etc. In the same way as expectant mothers are encouraged to 'pack a bag' ready for going into hospital, consider packing a 'flood bag'; include a torch and a battery operated radio.
- Make sure you know how to switch off gas, electric and water supplies at the mains – even in the dark.
- Unplug all electrical items and where possible store them up high or upstairs. With heavy electrical items such as fridges raise them up on bricks.
- Try to enlist some helpful (and preferably strong!) friends to help you move your furniture upstairs.
- Check whether you can get your settee upstairs. If you can't, consider buying some huge strong plastic bags to wrap it in and allow it to float. Depending on how long the water is in your home that may well save it from damage (details in the blue pages on the [NFF website www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk)).

- Work out where you can move your car to if there's a flood.
- Make plans to evacuate the family – where will you go? Can children go to friends or relatives? Keep a number for a local hotel/B&B with your contact list – check your home insurance policy covers the cost of an emergency stay.
- Make plans for family pets – have a number for a kennel/cattery/vet or friends who may look after them for you.
- Have flood protection products such as airbrick covers / door gates available if they are appropriate to your property. Have the number of your local council available so that you can contact them to provide sandbags if they are needed. Please note many councils do not promote sandbags—find out if yours does now. The NFF does not promote the use of sandbags as apart from filtering the water they have little effect, are heavy to use and are contaminated as soon as they are wet. Details of “modern day” sandbags and flood protection products are available in the “blue pages” directory on the [NFF website www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk).
- Draw up a family flood plan and make sure everyone knows what to do should your home be flooded. Older children can be given responsibilities such as moving their prize possessions upstairs.
- Having arrangements in place to evacuate younger children and/or elderly members of the family to relatives or friends is a good idea as flooding can be very distressing for them.

Outside the house

- If you have small pets in the garden (rabbits/guinea pigs etc.) plan where you can move them to safety.
- Consider having the exterior walls of your home coated with waterproofing treatment – it might keep the water out in some circumstances.
- Do some basic maintenance checks outside - make sure the mortar between your bricks is in good condition and won't let water through. Also check that the access points for pipes (such as washing machines etc.) don't have gaps around that could let water in.
- The Environment Agency's Floodline on 0845 988 1188 offers up to date flooding information for your area and can also send you a range of useful publications on preparing for flooding, what to do during a flood and the aftermath. These can also be ordered through the Environment Agency's website on: www.environment-agency.gov.uk



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