

**“ I’m just about to
flood, help! ”**

You're just about to flood

You've had a flood warning and things look bleak – your home is about to flood. Despite a growing sense of panic, try to keep calm!

There are things you can do now to try and minimise the damage to your property, to make the process of clearing up and sorting everything out after the floodwaters go a bit easier.

If you have a flood plan for your family have a quick look and make sure that you have done everything you can to prepare:

- Open doors and windows and smear the frame with silicone sealant, then shut and lock them to provide a watertight joint. For floods deeper than a metre, you should allow water to enter the property to prevent any structural damage that could be caused by a build up of water outside.
- If you have flood protection measures such as air-brick covers and door guards make sure you get them in place in plenty of time – they can under some circumstances (usually when the water rises and falls quite quickly in your area) make the difference between having floodwater in your house or not. Practise fitting these devices in advance so that you aren't struggling with instructions at the last minute.
- if you haven't bought any flood protection products see if you can cover windows, doors and airbricks with plywood, sandbags or metal sheeting. The Environment Agency has a practical guide to doing this at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.
- Have you moved as many possessions as you can upstairs? Try to move valuable and valued things (family mementoes, heirlooms etc.) upstairs if possible. Get everyone involved in helping – even children can take their toys upstairs for safekeeping.
- Move anything not fixed down such as dustbins and garden furniture to a safer location.
- Are provisions for surviving the first few hours of the flood in place upstairs? Remember warm clothes (you will have no heating and flood water is freezing cold), wellingtons, torches, battery operated radio, fully charged mobile phone, food & hot drinks (make these before you switch the power off!) any medication needed by your family, pet food (if you aren't able to get your pets to another place prior to the flood), essential toiletries, rubber gloves, first aid kit
- Make sure you have a list of useful numbers upstairs (or at least a telephone directory). These should include your insurers, numbers for somewhere to stay during the flood (family, friends, B&B, hotel, - if you are insured your insurers should pay for this – check your policy to make sure you are covered), kennels/cattery/petshop (if you need to make provision for pets)

- Turn off gas & electricity supplies – if you do get flooded do not attempt to put these on again until they have been checked by an expert – water may have got into the system and this could be dangerous.
- Think about your car – is it in danger of being flooded too? If so move it to higher ground.
- If you have to move to a B&B or hotel as a temporary measure try and arrange this as quickly as possible – if a lot of families are flooded in your area it might be difficult to find accommodation.
- Make plans as to where you are going to stay whilst repairs are being carried out to your home – do this quite quickly as if a lot of people have been flooded in your area it may be difficult to find temporary accommodation.

What you can do during a flood

Make sure you stay safe during the flood itself.

- Don't try and walk or drive through floodwater – six inches of fast flowing water can knock you off your feet and two feet of water will float your car. Manhole covers may have come off and there may be other hazards you can't see.
- Don't walk on sea defences, river banks or cross bridges as they may collapse or you could be swept off by a large wave.
- Avoid contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated with sewage.
- Contact friends, relatives, your employer and children's schools by mobile phone to let them know what has happened. People are usually very understanding as they realise what a dreadful experience flooding is.
- Contact your insurance company and tell them what has happened. Get them to send a loss adjuster as soon as possible. Tell your landlord if applicable.
- If you have elderly or disabled neighbours try to find out if they are safe – if you are really worried contact the emergency services. Sadly, elderly people have drowned during floods in recent years simply because they stayed at home and no one checked that they were OK.
- If you have pets make arrangements for them to be boarded out with friends or family, kennels or cattery. Some pet shops also offer boarding for small animals.



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