

ADVICE ON FLOODING

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LINCOLNSHIRE EMERGENCY
PLANNING UNIT ON BEHALF
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Helping to make Lincolnshire a safer
place to live and work

Flooding Information Leaflet

Please keep this leaflet by your telephone or in another easily accessible place to be used in the event of flood alerts and / or flooding to your property.

How to find out about the possible threat of flooding:

Ring the Environment Agency Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or visit their website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk. Also tune your radio in to the local station:

- BBC Radio Lincolnshire 94.9 FM & 1368 AM
- Lincs FM 102.2
- Smooth Radio 106.6
- BBC Radio Nottingham 95.5 FM & 103.8 FM
- Rutland Radio 107.2 & 97.4 FM
- BBC Radio Humberside 95.9 & 1485 AM
- BBC Radio Cambridgeshire 96 FM & 95.7 FM
- Hereward FM 102.7
- Lite FM 106.8 FM



What should I do if I think my property is in danger of flooding?

Be prepared in advance if you know that your property is in a location which could be threatened by flooding.

BEFORE

- Be aware of the flooding risks to your property;
- Make sure that you are insured, check with home contents and building insurers and seek their advice;
- Be aware of the latest news, weather reports and any flood warning in force from the Environment Agency;
- Make up a family flood plan. Make a flood kit, including a battery / wind up radio, torches, blankets, waterproof clothing, plastic gloves, first aid kit, camera, and any other personal documents or valuable possessions;
- Ensure that you understand the flood warning system;
- Prepare children's essentials;
- Safely store family medication;
- If flooding is imminent, turn off gas, electricity and water at the mains;
- Unplug electrical items and move them upstairs if possible;
- Move furniture and any sentimental items upstairs if possible;
- Install sandbags and / or flood boards to external doors, cover up airbricks;
- Put sandbags on top of manholes;
- Move your car to higher ground if possible;
- If there are any vulnerable neighbours living nearby ensure that they are also prepared;
- House gullies should be cleared of debris, leaves etc, to help flood water drain away;
- Plug sinks/baths and put a sand bag in the toilet bowl to prevent backflow;
- Ensure safety of pets and animals.

Confirm that you are properly insured under the terms and conditions of your insurance policy. The Association of British Insurers has advised that many householder's (both buildings and contents) policies, comprehensive motor policies and many business policies do cover damage by flood water. In the event of flooding to your property inform your insurers that you need to submit a claim by telephoning the emergency help-line provided by your insurers and which will probably operate 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Then follow this general advice:

- Damaged possessions should not be disposed of until your insurance company instructs you to do so;
- Photographs or a video of the damage will assist your claim;
- Take time in calculating your claim, how much work is required to be done, replacement requirements and the costs involved. If necessary seek technical advice;
- Supervise your own repairs and building work wherever possible – do not rely on loss adjusters or insurance companies;
- Try to employ a local builder if possible. Alternatively your insurer may be able to advise recommended builders in your area;
- Please be aware of opportunist builders who have been known to move into areas following emergencies. If your need is urgent you may have no alternative, but do not agree to handing over money in advance, this should only be done when the job is completed to your satisfaction.

What support will I get from the local authorities?

The immediate response to a disaster is provided by the emergency services – Police, Fire and Rescue, and Ambulance service. Lincolnshire County Council and each District, City and Borough Council within the county has a plan for civil emergencies. In the case of flooding and where properties are flooded, District, City and Borough Councils will provide support and guidance to residents.

DURING

- Keep listening to local radio;
- Call the Environment Agency Floodline for advice (see useful contacts);
- Be prepared to co-operate with the emergency services i.e. in the event of evacuation;
- Put plugs in the bath and sinks, put sandbags on top of them, place sandbags into toilets to prevent backflow and disconnect electrical appliances etc;
- Try and move as much as possible upstairs, but don't take any risks;



- Think about your valuables which should include things that can't be replaced such as treasured photographs and don't forget your insurance policy!
- If you do have to be evacuated from your property because of flooding make sure your premises are secure and don't leave windows open in the hope it will help to dry out the property. Notify the Police that your property has been vacated;
- Wait for floods to subside.

Emergency Support Centre

During a flooding incident it is possible that a number of people will be unable to remain in their homes. Depending on the situation the District, City and Borough Councils, in consultation with the emergency services and the County Council Emergency Planning Unit, may choose to open Rest Centres to accommodate the community that has been displaced.

If requested to evacuate follow the instructions of the Emergency Services, only take what is essential and do not put yourself or others at risk. If it is safe to do so it is advisable to take the following items with you:

- Medication for you and your family members;
- Extra clothing and a blanket;
- Personal wash kit;
- Household pets;
- At least one form of identification;



And remember; if possible, turn off gas, electricity, and water supplies at the mains.

If you choose to remain in your home you should:

- Remain vigilant and move valuables upstairs;
 - Turn off all electricity, water and gas if floodwater enters your home;
 - If you change your mind and decide to leave follow the instructions given above.
- The Police should be contacted on 999 in an emergency.

AFTER

General advice on protecting against infection

The floodwater affecting your home or other property may be contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other contaminants. However, infection problems arising from floods in the UK are actually rare. Although harmful micro-organisms in flood water are very diluted and present a low risk, there are a few precautions to be aware of when dealing with flooding which should prevent unnecessary additional health problems.

If you follow the basic advice below you should not experience any additional health problems.

- Floodwater and sewage often leaves a muddy deposit however, experience from previous flooding and sewage contamination has shown that any risk to health is small (You do not need any booster immunisations or antibiotics);



- Always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating or preparing food, after being in contact with flood water, sewage or items that have been contaminated by these, or participating in flood clean up activities;
- Don't allow children to play in flood water areas and wash children's hands frequently (always before meals). Wash floodwater-contaminated toys with hot water or disinfect before allowing them to be used:



- Keep any open cuts or sores clean and prevent them from being exposed to flood water, wear waterproof plasters;
- Harmful bacteria such as E.coli may be present in sewage and animal slurry, and this can pass into flood water, although there is likely to be substantial dilution. If anyone does develop a stomach upset following direct flooding or contact with sewage ensure they seek medical advice;
- If the flood water contained oil, diesel etc this should in the main be removed with the floodwater and silt. Any remaining oil / diesel contamination, in areas that are accessible, can be removed by using a detergent solution and washing the surface down. In inaccessible areas such as under floor boards, it may present an odour problem but it is not necessarily a health hazard.
- Further advice should be sought from the Environmental Health Unit of the local authority if the odour persists or if you are particularly concerned about it for other reasons;
- Whilst in the property, floorboards, walls etc will continue to dry out, any loose material or dust resulting from this should be vacuumed up on a regular basis;
- Very young children should avoid playing direct on timber floorboards or any damaged tiled floors if possible and be aware of the risk of injury from sharp edges on tiles or raised nails in the floorboards until these have been repaired;
- Help for vulnerable and elderly people returning to their houses may be available from Lincolnshire County Council Adult Social Care and Childrens Services;
- Contact your doctor if you become ill after accidentally ingesting (swallowing) mud or contaminated water and tell them your house was flooded.

Gardens and play areas

- Do not let young children play on affected grassed or paved areas until they have been cleaned down and restored to their normal condition;
- Sunlight and soil help destroy harmful bacteria and any excess risk to health should disappear completely within a week or so. (The best way of protecting health is to always wash your hands before eating or preparing food);

- Frozen food that has been at room temperature for a few hours should be discarded. Put contaminated flood damaged food in black plastic refuse sacks, seal and dispose of it in accordance with local advice. Check with insurers before disposal;
- Don't be tempted to try and salvage damaged food, including tins as they may be contaminated with sewage and chemicals left from the flood water.

If your drinking water becomes contaminated

- People whose drinking water comes through a mains supply should follow the advice of their local water company regarding the safety of their water supply. Water companies have a duty to take all necessary steps to protect public health. If a water treatment works becomes flooded alternative supplies are normally available but consumers may be advised to boil water before drinking or temporarily refrain from using water for domestic purposes;
- If you notice a change in water quality, such as the water becomes discoloured or there is a change in taste or smell, or if you are unsure, ring your local water company. If in doubt, boil all water intended for drinking or use bottled water;
- If you have been advised to boil your water, then boil all water for drinking, brushing teeth, washing food, and making ice;
- Boiling water kills pathogenic bacteria, viruses and parasites that may be present in water. Bring water to the boil and then allow it to cool before drinking. It can be stored in a clean jug covered by a saucer in a cool place (preferably in the fridge). Ice should be made from water prepared for drinking;
- Water from the hot tap is not suitable for drinking, Ensure the water taps are cleaned and disinfected before using them for the first time;
- If there is a bottle-fed baby in the house, make sure their water is boiled and do not use bottled water unless it is recommended by a doctor or health visitor, as some bottle water is unsuitable for babies as it contains too many salts for their immature kidneys to manage;
- If your water is from a private supply such as a well or spring, check that it has not been affected by floodwater. If a private well or spring has been covered by flood water, if the water changes colour or taste, or you believe the supply has been affected by the flood then boil (or otherwise treat) the water. Continue to boil the water until the supply has been tested and shown to be safe.



Remember the following

- Replace manhole covers dislodged by the flood;
- Do not switch on electrical appliances, which have been in contact with floodwater unless a competent electrician has checked them. Your local Electricity Board will be checking main supplies;
- Ensure your house is properly aired to encourage drying;
- Make sure any mould growth is properly treated;
- Finally, both physical, associated with over exertion in cleaning up premises, and mental stress, caused by temporary relocation, may cause you to feel unwell. The major health hazard a flood comes from the stress and strain of the event, not infection. The Citizens Advice Bureau can offer advice on a wide range of topics to assist with the recovery from a flood. The Samaritans provide emotional support and can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you feel unwell this does not mean that you are necessarily suffering from an infection, if you are still concerned you can always visit your own doctor.

If the inside of your home is affected

- Remove all soft furnishings and fittings that are damaged beyond repair;
- Remove dirty water and silt from the property, including the space under the ground floor if you have wooden floors, this space may need pumping out;
- Wash down all hard surfaces with hot soapy water until they look clean, allow these to thoroughly dry as this will also help destroy germs left behind;
- Heating and good ventilation will assist in the drying process.



Clothing and bedding

- Clothing, bedding and other soft / fabric articles, including children's toys etc should be washed on a hot wash (60 degrees or the highest temperature indicated on manufacturers instructions) which will destroy most germs that may be present. Other soft furnishings that have been contaminated and cannot be put in a washing machine will have to be cleaned professionally or, if this is not possible, may have to be disposed of.

It is recommended that you only fully re-occupy your home once the above cleaning has been carried out. There may be additional works to be carried out eventually as advised by your insurance company, housing officer, landlord, builder etc. If you decide to return to your house before this further work is complete you should:

- Try to have some heating on at all times, consider the use of a dehumidifier, ensure the property is well ventilated, leave windows open as much as possible but remember security!
- Ensure that if you have air-bricks to any under floor spaces that these are unblocked to give cross-ventilation to these spaces.

Food preparation and storage

- Do not eat any food that has been covered by or come into contact with flood water or sewage;
- Wash your hands before and after preparing food;
- Ensure all surfaces that food will come into contact with are sound and disinfected. Particularly, make sure that the shelves, including those in your refrigerator where food is stored, are cleaned and disinfected;
- Use boiled water which has been allowed to cool to wash food which is eaten raw;
- It is safe to use tap water which has not been boiled in the preparation of food which is to be cooked;
- It is also safe to use tap water that has not been boiled for cooking if it will be boiled during the cooking process;
- Food preparation surfaces should be wiped down using hot soapy water. Dishes and other utensils should also be washed in hot soapy water or dishwasher;
- Caterers should seek detailed advice from the Environmental Health Unit
- Try to keep any opened foods in an enclosed box or tin;
- All crockery, pots and pans should be thoroughly washed with hot soapy water before using, if any of these are badly damaged or chipped do not use;
- Health risks can be minimised by taking general hygiene precautions and by the use of protective clothing (waterproof boots and gloves) whilst cleaning.



Road Traffic

Flooding usually results in the blocking of roads by water. The County Council, in conjunction with the Police, will endeavour to ensure there are warning signs in place to warn of roads that are closed (if a road is found to be blocked an alternative route should be used). The situation changes rapidly and under no circumstances should signs blocking roads be removed or ignored. A relatively small amount of fast flowing water has the power to move vehicles from the road and can be potentially fatal. There will be regular updates on the local radio and television.



Lincolnshire Local Authority Sandbag Policy

Planning

Local Authorities will maintain a stock of sandbags and sand strategically located within their district.

The Local Authorities will liaise with local Parish Councils / Communities in flood planning and build up resilience in flood risk areas, by jointly identifying vulnerable sectors of the community and giving advice and guidance on the best means of being prepared for flooding, as well as by promoting community self help and initiatives such as the Environment Agency's Flood Warnings Direct system.

Emphasis will be given to pro-actively notifying householders of the risk they face from flooding and the need for self-help including such methods as the use of targeted mail shots incorporating this LRF Advice on Flooding leaflet.

Provision of Sandbags

During a flooding event the Local Authority will attempt to deliver sandbags to properties occupied by vulnerable people within the flood warning zone directly e.g. the elderly, the infirm and those without their own transport etc. Other groups will be asked to collect sandbags either from designated distribution points identified in public literature or radio broadcasts, from each local authority or from local builder's merchants.

No charge will be made for sandbags issued by the Local Authority during a flooding event but costs will be recorded for possible cost recovery by the Local Authority from Central Government.

Sandbags may not be provided to protect gardens, outbuildings or garages.

The Local Authority will not accept responsibility for the placement of sandbags, except at locations where infirmity or disability is an issue.

Clean Up

Apart from sandbags issued to vulnerable groups the local authority will not be responsible for the disposal of contaminated sandbags following a flooding event. Information will be provided on the most appropriate method of disposal but once issued the sandbags become the property of the occupier or organisation.

Assistance will be provided to vulnerable people who have received sandbags by the local authority.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

If you would like any further local information please contact your Local Authority or Internal Drainage Boards on the following telephone numbers or visit their websites.

Local Authority	Contact No	Website
Boston Borough Council	01205 314200	www.boston.gov.uk
City of Lincoln Council	01522 881188	www.lincoln.gov.uk
East Lindsey District Council	01507 601111	www.e-lindsey.gov.uk
North Kesteven District Council	01529 414155	www.n-kesteven.gov.uk
South Kesteven District Council	01476 406080	www.southkesteven.gov.uk
South Holland District Council	01775 761161	www.sholland.gov.uk
West Lindsey District Council	01427 676676	www.west-lindsey.gov.uk

Internal Drainage Board	Contact No	Website
Black Sluice IDB	01205 361061	www.blacksluiceidb.gov.uk
Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board	01507 328095	www.lmdb.co.uk
Newark Area IDB	01636 704371	www.naidb.co.uk
South Holland IDB	01406 424933	www.south-holland-idb.gov.uk
Upper Witham IDB	01522 697123	www.uwidb.co.uk
Welland & Deepings IDB	01775 725861	www.wellandidb.org.uk
Witham First District IDB	01522 794479	www.witham-1st-idb.gov.uk
Witham Third District IDB	01522 794479	www.witham-3rd-idb.gov.uk
Witham Fourth District IDB	01205 310088	www.w4idb.co.uk

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Anglian Water (24 hr)	08457 145 145
Electricity (Central Networks)	0800 056 8090
Environment Agency (Floodline)	0845 988 1188
Environment Agency (Web-site)	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Environment Agency (Emergencies)	0800 80 70 60
Gas (National Grid)	0800 111 999
Health Protection Agency	01476 514699
Health Protection Agency (out of hours)	0115 929 6477
Health Protection Agency (Web-site)	www.hpa.org.uk
East Midlands Ambulance Service (In case of emergency)	999
Lincolnshire County Council	01522 552222
Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service (switchboard)	01522 582222
Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service – (In case of emergency)	999
Lincolnshire Police, Nettleham	01522 532222
Lincolnshire Police, (In case of emergency)	999
Met Office	www.metoffice.gov.uk
Powergen	www.powergen.co.uk
Severn Trent Water (24 hr)	0800 783 4444
Yorkshire Electricity	0800 375 675
Yorkshire Water (24 hr Emergency Line)	0800 1573553

USEFUL SOURCES OF ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Citizens Advice Bureau	08701 224422
Lincs FM	01522 549977
BBC Radio Lincolnshire	01522 511411
Consumer Direct	08454 04 05 06

YOUR OWN USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS



Devastated.

Think this couldn't happen to you?
Floods are devastating. Find out if you are at risk.
We can help.

Don't ignore the risk.
Be prepared for flooding.

Call **0845 988 1188** or visit
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline