

Simple ways to protect your home from flooding

Simple steps

Follow the checklist below to ensure you have taken the most basic steps in protecting your home from flooding.

Remember, you can call Floodline on 0845 988 1188 any time night or day for real-time flood warnings and advice.

Gas, electricity and water

- Put plugs into sinks and weigh them down with something heavy
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies at the mains. Find out where these are well in advance of any flood
- Unplug all electrical items and store upstairs or as high up as possible

Reduce flood water getting into your home

- Silicone sealant - open doors and windows, smear a layer of this around the frame, then shut and lock the door/window.
- Ideally, cover doors, windows and airbricks with plywood, sandbags or metal sheeting. Download our guide, below, for detailed instructions

Furniture and appliances

- Move as much furniture and electrical items as you can upstairs. Alternatively raise them up on bricks or blocks - this may be very helpful for large appliances such as fridge/freezers
- Move furniture away from walls, as this helps when drying your property later
- If you can, roll up carpets and rugs and put them upstairs
- If there is no time to remove curtains, hang them up over the rail so they are kept above flood water
- Leave internal doors open, or ideally, remove them and store them upstairs

Personal Items

- You cannot replace sentimental items. Think about permanently moving these upstairs, so you do not forget to move them in the case of a flood
- Keep important personal documents in a sealed bag, and in a location safe from floodwater

Outside the house

- Move anything not fixed down into a safer location, e.g. dustbins, garden chemicals car oil and similar
- Move your car to higher ground to avoid damage
- Weigh down manhole covers outside the house to prevent them floating away and leaving a hazardous hole

What to do When you Hear a Flood Warning

- Listen out for warnings on radio and TV and phone Floodline on 0845 988 1188 for more information.
- Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other items to safety.
- Alert your neighbours, particularly the elderly.
- Put sandbags or flood boards in place - but make sure your property is ventilated. Plug sinks/baths and put a sandbag in the toilet bowl to prevent backflow.
- Be ready to turn off gas and electricity (get help if needed). Unplug electrical items and move them upstairs if possible.
- Co-operate with emergency services and local authorities - you may be evacuated to a rest centre.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. Doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder, especially if the electricity fails.

Stay Safe in a Flood

- Floods can kill. Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater - six inches of fast flowing water can knock you over 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.
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water - you may get swept away or be struck by an object in the water.
- Don't walk on sea defences, riverbanks or cross river bridges if possible - they may collapse in extreme situations or you may be swept off by large waves. Beware of stones and pebbles being thrown up by waves.
- Avoid contact with floodwater - it may be contaminated with sewage.