

# Household Flood Plan

Remember:

Flooding is dangerous. It can happen very quickly.  
You need to be ready in advance.



Regional Community  
Resilience Group



# Flooding

This is your Household Flood Plan. It shows you some things which you can do before, during and after a flood.

By using this Household Flood Plan it will:

- Make you better prepared for a flooding incident.
- Help everyone to understand the roles of householders, the community and emergency responders.

- Leave you better informed of the dangers flood water poses to you and your community.
- Help you, your family and your community to respond to, manage and recover from a flood in your area.

Be Ready: You should also have these ready:

- Household Flooding Plan.
- Household Emergency Life Saving Plan.
- Community Emergency Plan.



# Be Ready:

## 1. Planning for flooding

Flooding in your home is extremely distressing and upsetting. Unfortunately not all flooding is preventable. It is important to be prepared as flooding can happen very quickly even in places where it has never flooded before. Here are some things you can do to prepare:

- **Check if your home is at risk of flooding** from rivers or the sea by checking the Strategic Flood map at: [www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/dfi-rivers](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/dfi-rivers).
- **Think about what extra things you can do to protect your home. This could include:**
  - Consider making changes to your home such as having tiles and mats instead of carpets.
  - Get a stock of sandbags from your local DIY store and keep them in a dry place.
- **Seek advice from your oil or gas supplier if your oil or gas tank may be at risk of flotation.**
- **Plan a safe exit from your home as you may find it difficult to get out of your home if there is flooding.**
- **Prepare a household emergency life-saving pack (see ‘HELP’ leaflet for advice).**

If you know you will need assistance to leave your home, who will you call?

Option 1 - Who will help:
Their contact number:
Option 2 - Who will help:
Their contact number:
- **Think about moving things which cannot be replaced such as photo albums and treasured items to a safe place for storage.**
- Make a list now of what you will move if flooding may be about to happen. This could include things like important documents, treasured items, electrical equipment, furniture, vehicles and garden furniture.



# Be Ready:

## 2. When flooding is likely or forecast

- Keep up to date with the latest news and weather reports.
- Put in place any flood protection equipment or sandbags you may have and move the items you have on your plan to their safe storage places.
- Make sure your household emergency life-saving pack is ready and put your family's medication in it.
- If you decide to stay at home, make sure it is safe to do so and move your family and pets upstairs or to a high place with a means of escape.



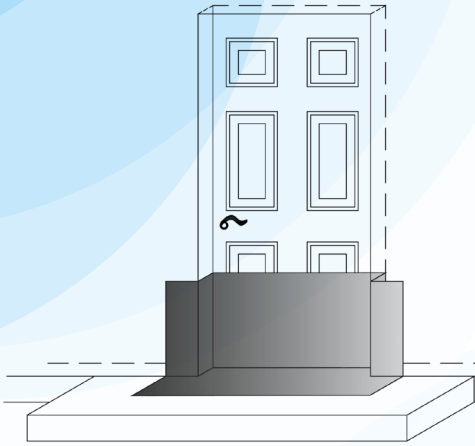


Diagram A

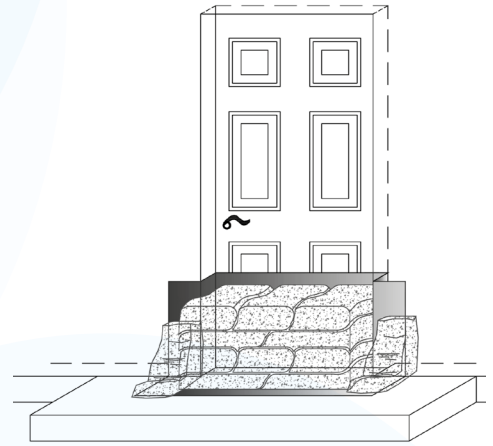


Diagram B

## How to build sandbags

1. Decide how high the wall or dam will be.
2. Place plastic sheeting as shown in front of opening. Tape may be required to hold in position until sandbags are built.
3. Always lay sandbags like a brick wall so that there is no gap at the joints. You can use a half-filled or three-quarter filled sandbag at the start of a row to do this.
4. After laying every row, compact the sandbags together by using your feet.

(Keep a copy in this plan somewhere safe in your house where everyone knows where to find it).

**Only consider this if you feel that it is safe to do so, otherwise seek help.**



# Be Ready:

## 3. Practical steps before a flood happens

Keep a copy in this plan and one somewhere safe in your house where everyone knows where to find it.

What to do (Start at the top and work down)	
Move pets and animals to a safe place.	
Consider installing any property protection equipment that you have e.g. sandbags, flood gates, air brick covers etc. If possible put sandbags on top of manholes.	
Check your house's drains are clear of debris, leaves etc., to help flood water drain away.	
Put the plug in your sinks/baths and place a weight on top of the plug.	
Important documents moved to a safe place or put in Household Emergency Life-saving Pack.	
Ensure your Household Emergency Life-saving Pack is ready.	
If you have any neighbours that might need help check to see they are also prepared.	
If flooding is imminent, turn off electricity at the mains.	
Do not attempt to turn off the electricity if water has already entered the property.	
Ensure your list of important items is moved to a safe place.	
Move your car out of the flood risk area.	
Move any furniture and electrical items to safety.	
Roll up rugs and put them somewhere high, not likely to flood.	
If you don't have time to remove them, hang the curtains over rods, rails or poles.	
Move any large or loose items from your garden or weigh them down.	
If possible, raise items in your garage or garden shed that could be damaged by flood water.	



# Be Ready:

## 4. What to do if flooding is happening

**Flood water can rise quickly; stay calm and reassure those around you. If you are in danger or someone's life is at risk, call 999 or 112.**

- Call Flooding Incident Line to report flooding in your area. It is open 24 hours, 7 days a week. Your report will be forwarded to the relevant agency who may respond depending on available resources and the scale of flooding.



- Stay safe: Avoid walking in flood water and try not to come into contact with it. It is difficult to know how strong or deep the water is. It can contain sewage, chemicals and sharp objects.

If you do come into contact with flood water you should thoroughly wash your hands and wash and disinfect your footwear.

- Check in with other people in your household - if they are not at home make sure they are somewhere safe.
- Keep children and animals away from flood water and areas where flood water has been.
- Check on vulnerable neighbours or relatives.
- Keep listening to local radio and TV for updates.
- If you can smell gas, call the NI Gas Emergency Service immediately.
- Check [www.trafficwatchni.com](http://www.trafficwatchni.com) for updates on any roads which may be affected or closed by flooding.





- Remember manhole lids may be displaced due to flooding and pose a trip or fall hazard.
- Consider if any travel is really necessary. If driving is unavoidable, do not drive through deep water. Remember by driving through flooded streets you are creating waves which may make flooding worse inside nearby houses.
- Be prepared to co-operate with the emergency services e.g. in the event of evacuation.
- 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 and let your family know where you can be contacted.
- Both physical stress associated with overexertion in cleaning up premises and mental stress caused by temporary relocation may make you feel unwell. Indeed, the major health hazard of floods comes from all the stress and strain of the event, not infection.

# Be Ready:

## 5. What to do after a flood

If you have had to leave your home, wait for flood waters to subside and make sure it is safe to return to your property before trying to go home. Take care as there could be structural damage to your property or other dangers such as broken glass or raised manhole covers.

### **If the inside of your home is affected**

- Contact your insurance provider. Do not throw away items until your insurance company has agreed you can.
- If you live in rented accommodation, contact your landlord.
- If you are a NI Housing Executive tenant call NIHE for repairs and contact your home contents insurance provider about any damaged personal belongings.
- If there was flooding inside your home do not touch electrical switches, appliances, sockets or your meter box. Get the wiring and appliances checked by a qualified electrician. If your mains electricity supply is affected by flooding call NI Electricity.
- If you can smell gas call the NI Gas Emergency Service immediately.



- Do not turn your gas supply on or use gas appliances until they have been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Call your local Council to let it know that flood water has entered your home. It can also give advice on cleaning up, structural damage, removing any bulky waste and help if you find vermin or pests in your home after flooding.
- Wear gloves, a face mask and work clothes when cleaning up. Change your clothes when you are finished and follow good hand hygiene - always wash your hands after cleaning up and before eating.
- Keep any open cuts or sores clean and prevent them from being exposed to flood water, wear waterproof plasters.
- 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. Only pump water out of your property when the level outside is lower than inside. This will reduce the risk of structural damage.
- 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.

### Cleaning up and disinfecting

The floodwater affecting your home or other property may be contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other contaminants. If you follow the basic advice shown in the next few pages it will reduce the risk of any additional health problems. Further advice should be sought from the Environmental Health Unit of the District Council if you are particularly concerned about any issues.





- Cleaning and disinfecting can be done using normal household products. If you are hosing down surfaces do not use a high-pressure hose as this could spray dirt and pollution into the air.
- Put items which have come into contact with flood water into heavy duty, sealable bags.
- Remove all soft furnishings and fittings that are damaged beyond repair once you have photographed them and your insurance company has told you to do so.
- Do not use items such as food, medicines and cosmetics which may have been in contact with flood water as they may be contaminated.

### Drying out your home.

- If drying out your home naturally, leave windows and doors open as much as possible.
- Remember that petrol or diesel generators and dehumidifiers should never be used indoors without good ventilation. Keep doors and windows open whenever possible. The exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide, which can quickly build up to poisonous levels without good ventilation.



The same risk is carried by portable grills, pressure washers, camp stoves, paraffin-fuelled heaters or other devices using gasoline, propane or natural gas. These devices should not be used indoors for heating or boiling water or cleaning. If you have to use these devices to boil water, this should be done outdoors. If you cannot use these devices outdoors and there are no other alternatives, they should only be used to boil water for as short a period as possible in well ventilated rooms. They should never be used to heat or dry out rooms. If you experience dizziness, headaches or disorientation, switch the appliance off, move to a well-ventilated area and seek medical advice.

- You can get more information on how to clean up, disinfect and dry out your home on the NI Direct website.

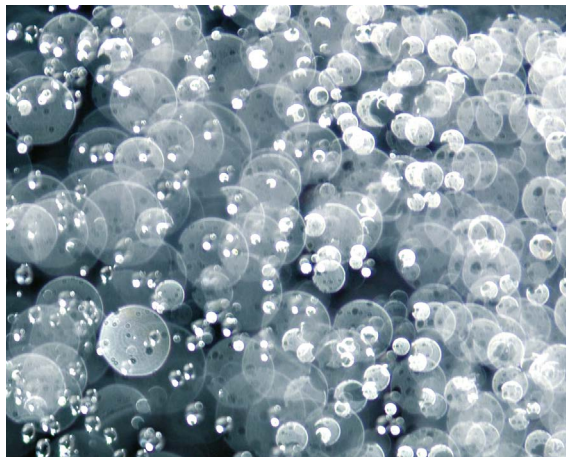
### Gardens, play areas and toys

- Don't allow children to play in flood water areas and wash children's hands frequently (always before meals).

- Do not let children or pets play on areas affected by flood water until they have been cleaned down and restored to their normal condition.
- Wash floodwater-contaminated toys with hot water or disinfect them before allowing them to be used. If they cannot be properly disinfected they should be disposed of.

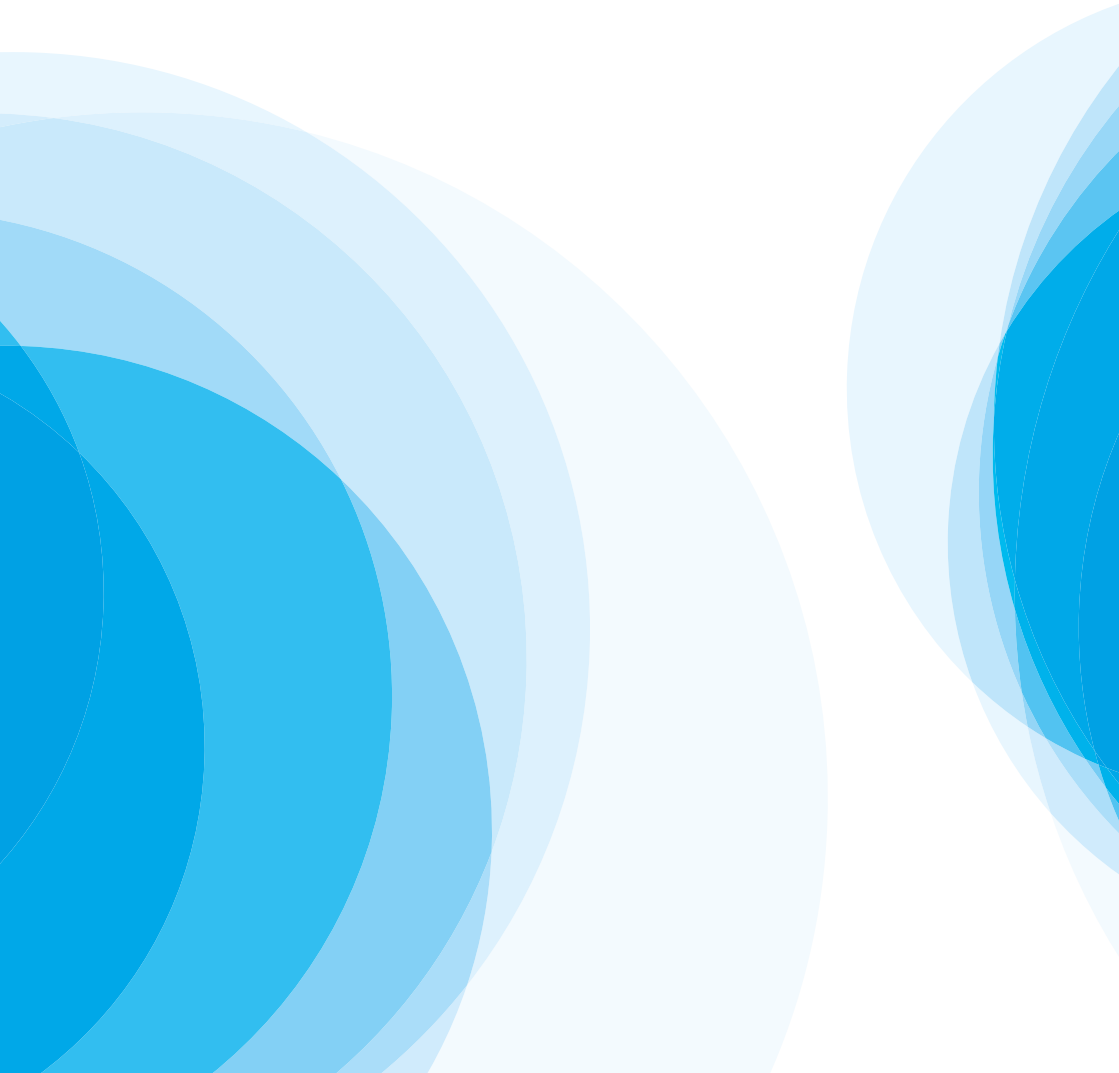
### Mains water supplies

- Mains tap water should not be contaminated after flooding. Wash your taps and let them run for a few minutes before use.
- If you notice a change in water quality, call NI Water's Waterline.
- If tap water has been contaminated, a health warning will be issued by NI Water and the Public Health Agency. Follow the advice given.









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