

Preparing for floods

Last winter was the wettest in the UK for nearly 250 years. Nationally, around 6,000 properties were flooded, causing millions of pounds worth of damage. This affected us in South Cambridgeshire too, with a large number of homes and businesses falling victim to flash floods. Two of our main roads, the A14 and A428, were also gridlocked for up to six hours.

Severe weather that leads to flash flooding is becoming a part of the changing UK weather pattern and it is important for people to be as prepared as they can be.

Flooding in your home or at your business premises can cost you a lot financially, but also cause inconvenience and heartache. It's impossible to completely flood-proof your property but there are steps you can take to reduce the damage flood water may cause:

- Check the flood risk to your property. The Environment Agency offers an online postcode search to see if your local area is at risk. If you are, sign up to receive automatic flood warning messages.
- Ensure that you have adequate buildings and contents insurance cover. Taking photos before any flood may help later with insurance claims.
- Prepare an emergency kit, including emergency numbers, insurance policy details, first aid kit, torch and water. Keep irreplaceable items safe and important personal documents in a sealed bag.
- Purchase sand bags from your local building merchant. If there is a flood, demand for these may exceed supply so buy them early and have them on standby.
- Purchase and have ready to hand flood protection such as floodgates to protect doors and garages and airbrick covers where they are close to the ground.



■ We gave people extra help to clear up after the floods last year



What to do when flooding is imminent?

- Move your car to higher ground if possible
- Tune in to local radio or television news for updates
- Pack essential items you will need if evacuated - medication, clothing, toiletries and items for children
- Turn off the mains power and water, and put sand bags in toilet bowls to prevent sewage back-flow
- Shut windows and lock doors
- Empty freezers and refrigerators if you can, leaving doors open
- Move people, pets and valuables to a safer place (e.g. upstairs)
- Leave the area if instructed to do so by the emergency services
- Do not attempt to drive through flooded roads, the water may be deeper than you think

For more advice on preparing for a flood, and getting help during and after a flood, visit www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood