

# ADVICE ON FLOODING



Emergency Planning at Charnwood



# Advice to householders and businesses in the event of flooding

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.

Flooding can pose a serious hazard to lives and property. By taking simple precautions you can minimise the damage caused by flooding

## 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](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk). Also tune your radio in to the local station:

- BBC Radio Leicester 104.9 FM
- Leicester Sound 105.4 FM
- Heart 106 FM
- Oak 107 FM



## Am I in an area at risk from flooding?



You can find out at Charnwood Council's web site: [www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk) Select "interactive Maps" on the right hand side. You can view many features that may affect your property, including areas at risk of flooding from the Environment Agency's data.

If you have never used the mapping system before please click on the *step by step user guide* before proceeding.



A simplified version of this can be found at the Environment Agency's web site:

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/)

Enter your town or postcode in "Are you at risk of flooding?" box.

This covers most of those at risk, but please note this does not include areas at risk from ground water flooding, which is not mapped by the Environment Agency. If you are concerned, the Council's Environmental Services department may be able to offer advice.

You can also contact the council on 01509 263151 during business hours or see

## Know your flood warning codes:

The Environment Agency issues flood warnings in the form of four codes. They may be issued in any order, usually ending in 'all clear'. Make sure you monitor local news and weather forecasts



Flooding of low lying land and roads is expected.

- Monitor local news and weather forecasts.
- Be aware of water levels near you.
- Be prepared to act on your flood plan.
- Check on the safety of pets and livestock.
- Charge your mobile phone.



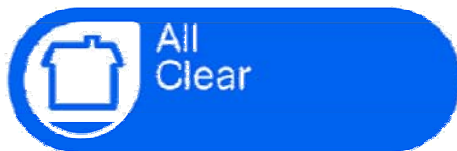
**Act now!** Flooding is expected.

- Move cars, pets, food, valuables and important documents to safety.
- Get flood protection equipment in place.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.
- Be prepared to evacuate your home.
- Protect yourself, your family and help others.
- Act on your flood plan.



**Act now!** Severe flooding is expected with extreme danger to life and property.

- Collect things you need for evacuation.
- Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.
- Stay in a high place with a means of escape.
- Avoid electricity sources.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood water.
- In danger call 999 immediately.
- Listen to emergency services.
- Act on your flood plan.



No further flooding is expected. Water levels will start to go down.

- Keep listening to weather reports.
- Only return to evacuated buildings if you are told it is safe.
- Beware sharp objects and pollution in flood water.
- If your property or belongings are damaged, contact your insurance company. Ask their advice before starting to clean up.

You can sign up for **automated flood alerts** from the Environment Agency on telephone, mobile, fax or pager.

Call **Floodline Warnings Direct** on **0845 988 1188** or visit the EA web site at:  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/)

## THE FLOOD PLAN

### **What to do if you think your 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 (contact your suppliers for advice if you don't know how);
- 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.

#### **Insurance:**

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. Leicestershire County Council and each Borough Council within the county has a plan for civil emergencies. In the case of flooding and where properties are flooded, Charnwood Borough Council will provide support and guidance to residents.

### Sand Bags:



The council maintains a limited stock of sand and sandbags at strategic locations across the borough. During emergency situations members of staff will distribute sandbags to affected areas and vulnerable people under the direction of the officers co-ordinating the emergency response.

Sandbags are not routinely made available to private households or businesses. It is unsafe for the general public to come to the depot to collect sandbags for their own use. We will only locate the sandbags on site (i.e. place the bags by the back door/garage etc) if the resident is physically unable to do so. Property owners may purchase sandbags and sand from most reputable DIY and building merchants.

### Charnwood Borough Council

Council Offices	Telephone:	01509 263151 (9-5 Mon - Thurs; 9-4.30 Fri)
Southfield Road	Minicom:	01509 215996
Loughborough	Out of hours:	01509 643979 (emergencies)
LE11 2TX	Web site:	<a href="http://www.charnwood.gov.uk">www.charnwood.gov.uk</a>

### Emergency Support Centres:

During a flood it may be that some people will be unable to remain in their homes. Depending on the situation the Council may open Rest Centres to accommodate people that have 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. Let the authorities know you have vacated your home:

Leicestershire Police 0116 222 2222  
or 999 in an emergency.

### During a flood:

- 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.

### After a flood:

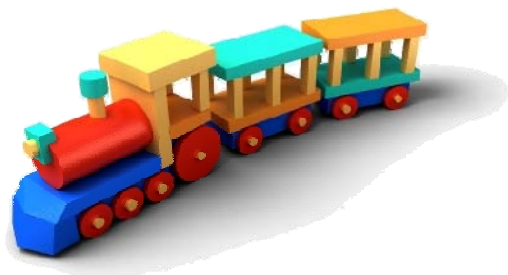
#### General advice on protecting against infection



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 Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care and Children's Services;
- Contact your doctor if you become ill after accidentally ingesting (swallowing) mud or contaminated water and tell them your house was flooded.
- 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 contaminated 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 stress, caused by over exertion cleaning up afterwards, and mental stress, caused by temporary relocation, may cause you to feel unwell. The major health hazard from a flood comes from the stress and strain of the event, not infection. See our leaflet: **Coping with a major incident** (available from the emergency planning section of Charnwood's web site). If you feel unwell this does not mean that you are necessarily suffering from an infection but if you are still concerned you should always visit your 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 Council's Environmental Health Officers.
  - 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 try 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.



Acknowledgements: Prepared with the help of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Resilience Forum, Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Department of Health,

# HOW CHARNWOOD COUNCIL DEALS WITH FLOOD RISKS

## Who's responsible for..?

...**main rivers**, such as the River Soar, are the responsibility of the Environment Agency.  
...**foul and surface water sewer networks** - [Severn Trent Water Limited](#) are responsible for all public sewers in this area and property owners can be responsible for other drainage.  
... **all other ordinary watercourses** including ditches and drainage channels are managed by the [Environmental Services](#) team of Charnwood Borough Council.

The Council has a network of **flood wardens** with local knowledge to monitor watercourses where there is a risk to homes and businesses. These individuals can spot potential blockages and provide on the spot information during an alert.

The wardens are trained by our drainage engineers to understand flood and severe weather warnings, and report to a 24 hour, 365 day monitoring centre.

We also have monitoring devices on many watercourses which trigger automatic alarms if water levels rise.

The Council has a legal duty to plan for emergencies, including making sure it can continue to deliver important services to the community in a crisis. After the severe floods of summer 2007, all local authorities (and many other agencies) have reviewed and updated their flood plans.

It does this through its **Emergency Planning** team who work on emergency plans with partner agencies as part of the [Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Local Resilience Forum](#). This includes all local authorities in the region, the emergency services, health and voluntary sectors plus Parish Councils. Plans are regularly tested by exercises at local, regional and national level

The council has also completed a comprehensive flood risk study for the entire borough to ensure future development is directed to areas of low flood risk.

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>EMERGENCY</b> Police, Fire, Ambulance	<b>999</b>
Charnwood Borough Council Mon-Thurs 9-5; Fri 9-4.30)	01509 263151
Minicom (for the deaf and hard of hearing):	01509 215996
Out of hours: (emergencies)	01509 643979
Electricity Central Networks Eastern Region Emergency Contact	0800 056 8090
Environment Agency Floodline	0845 988 1188
Incident hotline (24 hrs):	0800 80 70 60
Gas Emergency Contact	0800 111 999
Health protection Agency (East Midlands Office)	0115 9601400
Leicestershire County Council	0116 232 3232
Leicestershire Constabulary (non-urgent)	0116 222 22222
Severn Trent Water (24 hr emergency contact)	0800 783 4444.

## YOUR OWN USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Insurance company 24 Hour contact and policy number:	
Bank:	
Work:	
Doctor:	
Vet/kennel/cattery:	

**Further information:**



The advertisement features a photograph of a man in a dark t-shirt and shorts standing in a room that is partially flooded. He is holding a bucket and appears to be cleaning or moving items. The room contains a sofa, a chair, and a television. The background wall has several framed pictures. The top of the advertisement has a green header with the Environment Agency logo and name. The bottom has a dark blue background with white and yellow text.

**Environment Agency**

# 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](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline)

The lead agency for flooding in the UK is the Environment Agency. More information including up to date local flood warnings can be found at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/)

