UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Flooding

Flooding can happen even if you do not live next to a river. Surface water, groundwater, overflowing drains and the sea can all put homes at risk. The aim is simple: get warnings early, move people and pets to safety, and never walk or drive through flood water.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Check your risk and sign up for free flood warnings at gov.uk/check-flooding and gov.uk/get-flood-warnings, or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

02 If a flood warning is issued, move family, pets and essentials upstairs or to higher ground, and turn off gas, electricity and water only if it is safe — never if you are standing in water.

03 Do not walk, cycle or drive through flood water. It can hide open drains, be contaminated with sewage, and knock you off your feet. Call 999 if anyone is in immediate danger.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

A severe flood warning means danger to life. Follow the emergency services.

FLOODLINE (24 HOURS)

0345 988 1188

Warnings, advice and sign-up. Textphone: 0345 602 6340.

This guide is general public information for UK households. It is not a substitute for the emergency services, official local advice, or professional medical training. In an emergency, always call 999. Official warning and response advice can change — follow current guidance from the emergency services, the NHS and gov.uk/prepare. Three Day Kit (threedaykit.co.uk) is an independent brand and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, the UK government or any official agency.

BEFORE

WARNINGS, PLAN AND PROTECTION

The Environment Agency uses three warning levels in England: Flood Alert (flooding is possible), Flood Warning (flooding is expected) and Severe Flood Warning (danger to life). Similar warnings are used in Scotland and Wales.

01 **Check your risk and sign up for warnings**
Use **gov.uk/check-flooding** for current warnings and the next five days, and **gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk** for rivers, the sea, surface water and reservoirs. Sign up for free messages at gov.uk/get-flood-warnings. Floodline can also register you. Surface-water ("flash") flooding is not always covered by those warnings, so watch Met Office rain warnings too.

02 **Know who covers your nation**
England: Environment Agency and gov.uk/check-flooding. Scotland: SEPA and Floodline. Wales: Natural Resources Wales. Northern Ireland: check flood maps and report flooding on roads or burst mains on 0300 200 0100 (call 999 if you are in danger).

03 **Make a simple flood plan**
Decide where you would go upstairs or to higher ground, how you would move children, pets and anyone who needs help, and where you would meet if you were separated. Know how to turn off electricity, gas and water — practise finding the stopcock, consumer unit and gas valve now, in the dry.

04 **Protect the property if you reasonably can**
Keep insurance documents somewhere safe and check that your policy covers flood. Air-brick covers, door guards, non-return valves and raised sockets help in at-risk homes. The National Flood Forum can advise. Move irreplaceable items and important documents upstairs as a habit, not only in a warning.

05 **Pack what you would take**
A grab bag or your Three Day Kit should be easy to carry: medicines, documents, chargers, cash, a change of clothes, water, a torch and pet supplies. Keep wellies or waterproofs handy if you live in a risk area.

06 **Talk to neighbours and the Priority Services Register**
Agree who will check on anyone who would struggle to move quickly. If you need extra help from utility companies, register at thepsr.co.uk.

> **Remember the warning times.** A flood alert is often issued hours ahead; a flood warning may come only 30 minutes to two hours before flooding. Have a plan you can start immediately.

DURING

FLOODING IS POSSIBLE, EXPECTED, OR SEVERE

01 **On a flood warning, act — do not wait to see water**
Move people, pets and valuables upstairs or to higher ground. Put flood products in place. Turn off gas, electricity and water only if you can do so safely and you are not standing in water. Only move a car to higher ground if it is safe; never drive through flood water.

02 **On a severe flood warning, treat it as danger to life**
Stay in a safe place and be ready to evacuate. Follow the emergency services. Call 999 if you or anyone else is in immediate danger. If you are caught in a flash flood, get to higher ground or an upper floor if that is safe.

03 **Stay out of the water**
Do not walk, cycle or drive through it. Flood water can be deeper and faster than it looks. It may hide wreckage, missing manhole covers and uneven ground, and it may contain sewage and chemicals. 150 mm (about six inches) of fast-moving water can knock you over; 600 mm can float a car.

04 **If you have to leave**
Take your grab bag, medicines, documents, chargers, cash and pets if you can do so without delay. Tell someone where you are going. If you cannot stay in your home, your local council can help with emergency accommodation.

AFTER

ONLY RETURN WHEN YOU ARE TOLD IT IS SAFE

01 **Do not switch utilities back on yourself**
Check with the emergency services before you go back. Do not turn water, gas or electricity back on until a utility company or qualified engineer says it is safe. Photograph damage and the water line before you move things, then call your insurer. If you rent, tell your landlord; if you have no insurance, contact the council.

02 **Protect your health while you clean up**
Wear gloves and sturdy footwear. Throw away food that has touched flood water, and follow fridge and freezer rules if the power was off. If tap water changes colour, taste or smell, stop using it and call your water company. Flooding is exhausting and stressful — Floodline, your GP and the Samaritans (116 123) can help.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Keep a Three Day Kit you can pick up and carry: bottled water, no-cook food, medicines, copies of insurance and ID in a waterproof bag, cash, a torch, a power bank, a battery radio, warm clothes and any pet or baby supplies. Add a torch you can use if the electrics are off, and a paper list of Floodline, 105, your insurer and family numbers.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Checked long-term flood risk for my address
- [ ] Saved Met Office weather warnings for my area
- [ ] I know where and how to turn off electricity, gas and water
- [ ] Important documents copied and kept in a waterproof folder
- [ ] Medicines, glasses, chargers, cash and pet supplies ready to take
- [ ] Neighbour or family plan for anyone who would need help to leave
- [ ] Insurer, landlord and council numbers written on paper
- [ ] Signed up for flood warnings (phone, text or email) or called Floodline
- [ ] Household flood plan: where we go, who we help, where we meet
- [ ] Insurance documents checked and stored somewhere dry and high
- [ ] Grab bag / Three Day Kit packed so it can be carried quickly
- [ ] Flood products (if we use them) are to hand and we know how to fit them
- [ ] Priority Services Register considered (thepsr.co.uk)
- [ ] After a flood: photos taken before clearing, utilities left off until checked

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Immediate danger, or a severe flood warning with risk to life.

FLOODLINE
0345 988 1188
24 hours. Textphone 0345 602 6340. England, Scotland and Wales.

CHECK FLOODING / SIGN UP
gov.uk/check-flooding
Also gov.uk/get-flood-warnings and gov.uk/help-during-flood.

NI FLOODING (NON-EMERGENCY)
0300 200 0100
Roads, burst mains and blocked drains. Call 999 if you are in danger.

POWER CUT / ELECTRICAL HAZARD
105
Do not touch electrics if you are standing in water.

GAS EMERGENCY
0800 111 999
If you smell gas, or before utilities are turned back on after a flood.

YOUR WATER COMPANY
On your bill
Find your supplier at water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier. Report sewage overflow to them.

MET OFFICE & NHS
metoffice.gov.uk · 111
Weather warnings, and NHS 111 for urgent but non-life-threatening health advice.

SOURCES

Guidance in this booklet was checked against publicly available official advice in November 2026. Always follow the latest instructions from the emergency services and the links below.

1. GOV.UK, check for flooding, flood warnings, what to do before, during and after — gov.uk/check-flooding, gov.uk/get-flood-warnings, gov.uk/help-during-flood, gov.uk/after-flood, gov.uk/guidance/flood-alerts-and-warnings-what-they-are-and-what-to-do
2. Environment Agency / Floodline — 0345 988 1188
3. Met Office, what to do in a flood — weather.metoffice.gov.uk
4. British Red Cross and National Flood Forum advice for households
5. UK government Prepare / Be Ready — gov.uk/prepare

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication.