



Northumberland
County Council



Environment
Agency

Flooding: Winter Ready Northumberland



Flood Wardens

First of all, thank you to all of our Flood Wardens for your vigilance and hard work in making your communities more resilient to flooding and Climate Change. Your volunteer work is valuable and a cornerstone of true Flood Resilience.




This pack includes useful information for you and your community with regards to becoming Winter Ready. It can compliment your community plans and personal flood plans. Most will not be new information, but it will be bespoke to your local authority and area.

We hope you find this pack useful in the future.



Flood Warning Levels

What each warning means and what to do when they are issued.

Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Warning no Longer in Force	The warning is no longer in force.
	Flood Alert	Flooding is Possible, Be Prepared. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents • Check flood warnings locally
	Flood Warning	Flooding is Expected, Immediate Action Required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn off gas, water and electricity • Move things upstairs or to safety • Move family, pets and car to safety
	Severe Flood Warning	Severe Flooding, Danger to Life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 999 if in immediate danger • Follow advice from emergency services • Keep yourself and your family safe

Sign up to get flood warnings if your home or business in England is at risk of flooding. The service is free.

You'll need to provide:

- the address you want flood warnings for
- an email address
- a way to contact you at any time of day or night - you can choose to get a call, text or email



<https://www.fws.environment-agency.gov.uk/app/olr/home>

Before the Flood

What Flood Wardens can do before the flood to raise community resilience

✓ **Understand flood risk within your local area**

The risk of flooding that your community faces changes over time. New buildings, roads and even farming and land use practices can affect flood risk. Watercourses, culverts and drains can be affected by debris that could restrict their flow.

It will help to be aware of how changes within your local environment may impact on the risk of flooding. You can play an important role by acting as the “eyes and ears” of the local authorities.

✓ **Identify properties at risk of flooding**

Some properties are at greater risk of flooding than others. Knowing which properties are more likely to flood and possible flow routes of flood water can help you to become better prepared for an emergency. To help, take a look at a flood risk map of your local area. Consider which properties have flooded in the past. Also, look for properties in low lying areas or close to watercourses.

✓ **Identify vulnerable individuals**

Your strength as a community volunteer is your detailed knowledge of your local area and the people living within it. Build up an understanding of who lives in your area and especially anyone who may require priority attention during a flood. Once you have identified vulnerable individuals within your community keep this information safe and secure. Your group co-ordinator or Town or Parish Council may manage a list but you are advised to remember the information without writing it down.

✓ **Help raise flood awareness**

Helping to raise flood awareness within the community is an important activity within a community plan. Households and businesses may benefit from useful information such as; how to prepare for flooding, steps to protect property and emergency contacts.

✓ **Assist with the recruitment of community volunteers**

As a member of the community you may be ideally placed to identify other people with the enthusiasm, skills and attitude to support the community during an emergency. If you know of anyone suitable to be a community volunteer refer them to your flood plan co-ordinator. °

✓ **Do not attempt to enter or clear watercourses or culverts**

Report any debris in watercourses or culverts to your group co-ordinator and/or the local flood risk authorities in accordance with your community plan.

During the Flood

What Flood Wardens can do during the flood to raise community resilience

✓ **Prioritise your own safety at all times**

Your priority at all times is to ensure your own safety and not to place yourself at unnecessary risk of injury or harm. Follow procedures set out in your community plan. The procedures set out in your community plan are there to ensure a co-ordinated response from the community in the event of a flood. They are also there to promote your wellbeing and that of others.

✓ **Relay information to the local community**

The Emergency Services, local authorities or the Environment Agency may call upon your assistance to relay information to the community. This may be to warn the public of a potential flood and particular areas to avoid or to provide information to promote health and wellbeing. This would involve door-to-door visits to engage with individual properties.

✓ **Follow guidance from the emergency services at all times**

The Emergency Services and the Police in particular take the lead during a flood event. Follow their advice at all times as you may be placing yourself and others at risk of harm if you do not. Remember, you are not a member of the uniformed emergency services. If you are told to evacuate from an area follow the guidance you are given.

✓ **Provide the emergency services with local knowledge and information**

Your strength as a community volunteer is your detailed knowledge of your local area and the people living within it. Relay this information to the Emergency Services during a flood. Be mindful the information may relate to individual properties or persons and should be managed responsibly at all times.

✓ **Collect information about the flood**

Information you collect and record during a flood can be important to the Environment Agency and other authorities when analysing the cause and how to reduce risk in the future. Notes and especially photographs on flow routes and water levels can be very useful.

✓ **Alleviate worry and anxiety**

You can help your community by providing accurate information to your community from the information you receive.

During the Flood

✘ **DO NOT place yourself at risk at any time**

Your safety is a priority. Follow the guidance set out in your training and do not undertake activities that may place yourself at unnecessary risk.

✘ **DO NOT enter flood water at any time**

Flood water poses many different risks and dangers including; trips, slips, contamination, drowning and injury from submerged hazards. Do not enter flood waters.

✘ **DO NOT attempt to operate or repair flood defence structures or equipment**

The unauthorised use of flood defence equipment could increase the risk of flooding or hide problems that should be addressed by the relevant authority. Similarly, do not use any equipment you have not been trained or authorised to use



After the Flood

What Flood wardens can do after the flood to continue community resilience

- ✓ **Submit information you collected about the flood**
Information you collect and record during a flood can be important to the Environment Agency and other authorities when analysing the cause of the flooding and how to reduce risk in the future. Submit your information to your flood plan co-ordinator.

- ✓ **Help to relay information to the local community**
You may be able to support your community by relaying useful information after a flood. Newsletters and door-to-door visits can help keep people informed afterpain emergency. Information may relate to personal safety, hygiene, insurance claims or the risk of further flooding. ,

- ✓ **Support your community**
It can take many months for individuals, households and businesses to recover from flooding and return to normal daily life. This recovery process can be stressful and impact upon people in different ways. As a member of the community you may be able to provide support to those affected. Refer members of your community to a suitable authority or expert for further guidance and advice.



Post Flood Trauma

If anyone in your community is suffering from flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, anxiousness or any other mental health symptoms there is help available:

NHS: www.nhs.uk/mental-health

Mind Charity: www.mind.org.uk

Community Resilience

Your Community Officer:

Colin Hall – Engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk

Your Community Resilience Team:

Team Leader: Kirsty Hardy

Team Advisor: Alex Scaife

Team Member: Andrew Mallon

Colin can be contacted for all aspects of Northumberland Community Flood Resilience. He can also help communities establish flood groups and Community Flood Plans.

Personal Flood Plans

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan>

To use the QR to the left, use your smart phone camera
Hover over the image and follow the directions on screen.



Business Flood Plans

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-your-business-for-flooding>

To use the QR to the left, use your smart phone camera
Hover over the image and follow the directions on screen.



Resilience Advice

Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water

If you leave your home during a flood you'll need to turn off your mains water, gas and electricity if it's safe to do so. You should find out in advance how to do this.

The location of water stopcocks, gas shut-off valves and electrical master switches varies between properties. The gas shut-off valve is usually beside the meter. The mains electricity cut-off is usually a big red switch on your fuse box. If you can't find your water stopcock, ask someone with practical experience or a plumber to help you.

Protect your property

You can make changes to your property that will help you to get back to normal more quickly after a flood and reduce the damage flooding can do.

To reduce flood damage you can take steps such as laying tiles instead of carpets, moving electrical sockets higher up the wall and fitting non-return valves to stop flood water entering your property through the drains. Blue pages lists suppliers of flood products and services.

For more information on advance measures, get the National Flood Forum's property protection guides for property owners or for local authorities and professionals.

Simple maintenance like keeping drains and gullies clear of debris will also help to protect your property.

Check your insurance

Make sure you have insurance to protect your home or business. If you have buildings and contents insurance, check if flood damage is included.

If you rent your home, it's your responsibility to protect your belongings.

If you're finding it difficult to get your property insured for flooding, the National Flood Forum may be able to help.

The Flood Re scheme works with some insurance providers to reduce the cost of insuring certain homes against flooding.

Bookmark flood forecasting websites

Keeping a list of useful web pages can save time when you want to check:

- the weather
- flood warnings
- local river and sea levels

Find out where you'll get help

Areas prone to flooding may already have flood groups and community hubs where you can find food, clothing, shelter and advice during a flood. Some areas have community flood wardens - volunteers who monitor a specific local area and inform its residents when flooding is likely.

Visit the National Flood Forum or call them on 01299 403 055 for help in finding local support. You can also try searching for local flood groups on social media.

Useful Information

Report a flood or possible cause of flooding in Northumberland

Who you need to contact depends on what's flooding.

Sewers and burst water mains

Contact Northumbrian Water **0345 717 1100** to fix:

- Blocked sewers
- Burst water mains

Public drains and flooded roads

Contact Northumberland Council via their online form to:

<https://online.northumberland.gov.uk/citizenportal/form.aspx?form=555>

- Clear Public Drains
- Report a flooded road



Rivers and the sea

Call the Environment Agency **0345 988 118** or Textphone: **0345 602 6340**

to report::

- Collapsed or badly damaged river banks
- Flooding from main rivers or the sea
- Main rivers blocked by a vehicle or fallen tree causing risk of flooding
- Unusual changes in river flow

Contact Northumberland Council as above to report flooding from other rivers, brooks or streams.

Environment Agency incident hotline

0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service)

Groundwater flooding

Report groundwater flooding to Northumberland Council. Groundwater flooding is caused by water rising up through the ground.

Private drains

Floods caused by private drains are the responsibility of the property owner.