

INFORMATION FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Autumn and Winter Weather

Wiltshire Council is ready to respond in an emergency should there be flash flooding, but I am calling on communities and residents to do all they can to be prepared.

The recent flooding in the northwest of England is a timely reminder that emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time, so communities need to be as ready as possible.

We have been working extremely hard with our partners all summer to make sure the county is as prepared as it can be for the winter months. However, we have to be realistic about what we can do, so now is the time for residents to consider the impact of winter weather and for everyone to do their bit to keep gullies and drains clear so that water flows without obstruction. Consideration should also be given to stocking up on sandbags which are available for personal property protection from local builders' merchants.

Although the council offers help and support to help tackle sudden, extreme weather, the responsibility for protecting private property rests with owners. Residents can clear gullies blocked with debris but if the problem is more serious or people have other concerns this can be reported to Wiltshire Council:

- Online at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywiltshire-online-reporting> where people will be able to leave their email address and receive updates;
- Using the MyWilts app on a smart phone - again people will receive updates
- By telephone on 0300 456 0105 the customer services team will provide a log number
- During severe weather updates will be available on Twitter @wiltshireroads

Many parishes have already completed their snow and flood plans. As we move into a period of unsettled weather, now is the time to check your plans and refresh contact details.

I would also ask your help in advising residents that:

Be Prepared

It is their responsibility for protecting their home from flooding. Where they can the council, emergency services and Environment Agency will help, however if the flooding is over a large area, they may not be able to respond to every call.

Important documents and items should be stored safely in waterproof containers at the highest point of the property such as upstairs.

These may include items like:

- Passports
- Financial documents
- Insurance details
- Photos

Make a list of important and useful telephone numbers:

- Insurance company

- Water
- Electric
- Gas
- Local council
- Landlord

Appliances

Make sure they know how to turn off their gas, electricity and water supplies, even in the dark.

All electrical appliances should be:

- Unplugged
- Smaller items moved upstairs or to the highest part of the property
- Larger items raised on blocks

Furniture

Plug:

- Sinks
- Baths
- Showers

Weighing the plug down to prevent backflow.

Move as much furniture as they can upstairs those they can't, should be raised off the floor.

Insurance

The average cost of flood damage is £30,000 so you will need to check with their insurance company that the level of their insurance policy covers flooding and add the necessary cover if needed.

- Is my property insured against flood damage?
- Does my cover provide me with temporary accommodation?
- Will any necessary clean up or repairs to my property be taken care of?
- How much compensation will I receive to cover any damages to my property and contents?

Make an emergency flood kit of items:

- Blankets
- Warm/waterproof clothing
- Bottled water
- Food
- Torches
- Radio with spare batteries

- A first aid kit

Prepare food they can store and eat without cooking, store drinking water, keep warm clothing safe and keep a mobile phone fully charged.

Historic and listed buildings

For owners of historic and listed buildings English Heritage have produced an excellent booklet designed to assist those who live in, own or manage historic buildings that together with their historic fixtures and fittings are threatened by periodic flooding. Advice is provided on preventative measures to minimise flood damage as well as on the inspection, conservation and repair of historic buildings after flooding.

[Visit the English Heritage website](#) for more information.

Groundwater flooding

This kind of flooding presents particular issues as traditional methods of flood defence may not be effective as the water can come up through the floor and remain for a long time.

The most effective way to keep groundwater out of their home is to use a drainage pump, to divert water away from their home or business, however in some cases there may be too much water and this would be ineffective.

Where you pump the discharged water makes a difference

Water removed from a structure needs to be discharged in to a location at least several feet from their home. Regardless of whether you have public sewage or a septic tank, never pump the water into the sewage system. An overload on the system could cause the sewage to back up.

Pumping water onto the highway

Great care must be taken when pumping water onto the highway. The discharged water, pipes or operation must not create a safety issue. Pipes must be placed in a manner that they will not cause trip or obstruction hazards. Water wherever possible should be discharged into a working gully or in a manner that allows the water to easily and quickly disperse.

During freezing conditions pumping should be undertaken in a manner that prevents ice and hazard issues. This could involve using grit bags or regular salting.

If the highway authority believes pumping is causing a safety issue it will instruct the householder to amend their operations or cease if no alternative arrangements are available.

You can find more information on groundwater flooding on the [environment agency](#) website. If you would like more information and advice on groundwater flooding contact:- Floodline on 08459 88 11 88.