

Here Comes the Flood

Floods can happen at a moment's notice. Weather forecasts are not always accurate, and even when they are, warnings can come too late; meanwhile freak flash-floods can also occur, catching everyone by surprise, and there are many parts of the UK that are not covered by Environment Agency flood warnings.

Homeowners are responsible for protecting their own properties in the event of flooding, and although many now do so, local authorities are not legally obliged to provide the public with sandbags. Many local councils would recommend that persons residing in premises that have been prone to flooding in the past should maintain a small stock of sandbags for use in an emergency. Sandbags and sand can be obtained from local DIY stores, although rubbish bags filled with earth will also usually do the job. Use these to protect doorways, manholes and low air vents. A handy tip is to place a sandbag in your toilet bowl, to help prevent backflow.

If you live in a part of the UK which is more prone to flooding, it is doubly important that you ensure you have taken out adequate home insurance to safeguard your home and possessions. Check with home contents and building insurers, and seek their advice as to which insurance package is right for you.

When you know flooding is imminent, turn off gas, electricity and water (find out where these are well in advance of any flood), and unplug electrical items and move them upstairs. Also, be sure to move pets, vehicles and any furniture to safe, higher ground. It is worth rolling up carpet and moving it, if possible, and the same applies to curtains.

You cannot replace sentimental items, so think about permanently moving these upstairs, so you do not forget to move them in case of flooding in the future. Keep important personal documents in a sealed bag and in a location safe from floodwater. Move anything outside that isn't fixed down (such as dustbins or garden furniture) into a safe location. Do as much of this as you can in daylight, as doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder - especially if the electricity fails.

There are many dangers presented by floodwater, so it is advisable to avoid it, and check into a [budget hotel](#) until the flood has cleared and it is safe to return to your home. The most obvious danger is that you may get trapped in your home, but there are other risks too, and you should also never try to walk through floodwater. Just six inches of fast flowing water is enough to knock you over.

The flood will not however last forever. Once the water has cleared, it is time for the clearing up process, which may take weeks, months, or sometimes maybe even years. The most important thing to remember is that a flood could strike again at any time – and then you have to go through it all over again!

About the Author

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