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REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING ON YOUR HOME



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It is impossible to completely flood-proof a property (and it could lead to structural damage if attempted). It is the responsibility of all homeowners and residents to protect their own property, and there are lots of things you can do to reduce flood damage. It pays to prepare for flooding – and sandbags are the LEAST efficient method.

Even if your home or business is not directly at risk of flooding from a watercourse, you could still be affected by surface or groundwater flooding.

Protecting your Property

If your property is at risk of flooding then consider buying and installing property level protection (PLP) before any flooding occurs. Some PLP measures are temporary, while others involve permanent structural work. Some measures involve making changes that allow flood water to enter the property, but minimising the damage it can do. This eases the clean-up phase and speeds up the drying out process.

- **DOORS AND WINDOWS:** flood-proof doors and windows can be permanently installed, or temporary barriers can be fitted when flooding is expected
- **AIR BRICKS:** automatic flood-proof air bricks are available, or temporary covers can be fitted over air bricks when flooding is expected
- **FLOORS:** wooden floorboards can be permanently replaced by concrete and a damp-proof membrane, or pumps can be installed under floorboards
- **DRAINS AND PIPES:** non-return valves can be fitted to drains and inlet/outlet pipes. (These will help prevent wastewater from flowing back into the property from the sewage system)
- **EXTERIOR WALLS:** check the pointing, seal any gaps (such as service entrance points) and apply water-proofing sealant to exterior walls
- **LANDSCAPING:** landscape garden areas and driveways to help divert water away from your property
- **SANDBAG ALTERNATIVES:** there are now many suppliers of MODERN NON-SAND BAGS specifically designed for flood protection:
<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/bluepages/listing-category/sandbagalternatives/>

Note that specialist methods (such as ‘tanking’ basements) are needed to deal with groundwater flooding.

TAKE A COMMUNITY APPROACH: talk to your neighbours about methods that share both the costs and the benefits. For example, purchasing a temporary barrier to protect several houses, or creating permanent barriers (these are likely to require planning permission as well as expert design and construction).

Sometimes the water MUST be let in

For floods over 900mm depth, or of prolonged duration, attempting to keep the water out can cause serious structural damage, owing to the unequal water pressures either side of the walls.

In case this should happen, there are many things that can be done ('resilience' measures) to reduce the damage floodwater could cause:

- FLOORS: fit tiled floors with rugs, rather than laying carpets
- INTERNAL DOORS: fit synthetic doors, or install light-weight doors that are easy to remove when flooding is expected
- KITCHEN AND BATHROOM: units made from water-resistant materials such as stainless steel, plastic or solid wood can be used instead of chipboard carcasses. White goods can be raised on plinths
- ELECTRICALS: raise electrical sockets, fuse boxes, controls and wiring to at least 1.5 metres above floor level
- BOILERS, TELEVISIONS AND SIMILAR WALL-MOUNTED ITEMS: ensure these are fixed well above the maximum flood level expected
- SKIRTINGS: fit water-resistant skirting boards or varnish wooden ones.

Valuables and irreplaceable items, or those of sentimental importance should be kept on high shelves, or an upper floor, where possible.

What will it cost?

Protecting your property from flood damage will mean less costly repairs and limit the distress caused by flooding, as well as reducing the time your home is uninhabitable.

The cost of PLP will vary widely, depending on both the size of the building and the type (and duration) of flooding likely to affect it. As domestic flood damage claims typically range from £20,000 - £40,000 the investment can be highly cost-effective. You may wish to ask your mortgage company about extending the loan to cover the cost of making your property more flood resilient.

Choosing PLP

Professional advice from a Building Surveyor, Architect or other independent professional should be sought before purchasing PLP.

The NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM'S 'BLUE PAGES', an on-line listing of flood protection products and services, is available here:

<http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/bluepages>

Information is also available from the FLOOD PROTECTION GROUP of the Property Care Association here:

http://www.property-care.org/Homeowners.Flood_Protection.asp

For more information on PLP of all types, the 'HOMEOWNERS GUIDE TO FLOOD RESILIENCE' is available here (free-download):

http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf

Further Information and Contacts

'Prepare for flooding' (GOV.UK):

<https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood/find-out-if-youre-at-risk>

For flood risk maps of rivers/sea and surface water, visit:

http://watermaps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiyby.aspx?layerGroups=default&lang=_e&topic=floodmap&scale=1&ep=map&y=355133&x=357682#x=357682&y=355133&scale=1

Call Floodline on **0345 988 1188/0845 988 1188** to see if your property or business is at risk.

To register with the Floodline Warnings Direct service visit:

<http://fwd.environment-agency.gov.uk/app/olr/register>

'Homeowners Guide to Flood Resilience': (free download) is available here:

http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors:

<http://www.rics.org/uk/>

Royal Institute of British Architects:

<http://www.architecture.com>



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