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FLOODING: FLOOD INVESTIGATIONS



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Oxfordshire County Council is the 'Lead Local Flood Authority' for the County.

One of our legal duties is to investigate incidents of flooding, when considered necessary.

Such investigations are carried out to determine:

- Who has the responsibility for co-ordinating the management of the type of flooding involved**
- Whether the responsible organisations/individuals have acted (or intend to act) in response to the flooding**

When are they carried out?

When a completed Flood Incident Report Form is received by the County Council the details will be reviewed to see if a formal investigation is needed. The following tests are used to decide this:

- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) to five or more residential properties or businesses within an area of 1km².
- Internal flooding of a business premises employing more than ten people within an area of 1km².
- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) of at least one property or business for one week or longer.
- Flooding of one or more items of critical infrastructure, which could include hospitals, health centres, clinics, surgeries, colleges, schools, day nurseries, nursing homes, emergency services, (police, fire, ambulance) stations, utilities and sub-stations.

* 'Internal flooding' as used here means where floodwater has crossed the threshold of a commercial or residential building.

** 'Close proximity' as used here means where it is reasonable to assume that the affected properties were flooded from the same source (or a combination of sources, such as surface water and groundwater acting together).

Procedure

If it is decided that a Flood Incident Investigation is required, an Investigating Officer will first carry out a study of available information (such as mapping and historic records) and then visit the area that was flooded.

Flood Risk Management Authorities

It is not the responsibility of the Investigating Officer to provide a solution to the flooding problem itself, but to establish the cause and then notify the relevant organisations and individuals who need to take action. The people affected by the flooding will also be informed of the result of the investigation.

The relevant authorities/individuals include:

- Water companies (water mains and sewer flooding)
- Highways Agency (road flooding only)
- The Environment Agency (main river flooding)
- District Councils/County Council (for floods not affecting roads)
- Private landowners/homeowners, who have responsibilities in relation to land drainage and ownership of watercourses
- Parish Councils and the community generally.

If there has been widespread flooding in the county and a large number of Report Forms need to be investigated then the most serious will be looked at first, then the others. To make this decision, factors such as the number of properties affected; the extent, depth and duration of the flooding; the history of flooding in the area; and the impact on infrastructure (such as major roads, railways, electricity sub-stations and the like) will all be considered.

The Council will usually complete a Flood Incident Investigation within six months of receiving a Flood Incident Report form. This may not be possible on occasions when extensive flooding has occurred across the county.

If the flooding is an Emergency

In an emergency dial 999. This service is primarily responsible for saving life. Fire and Rescue may also pump out floodwater from affected properties.

For Road Flooding

Use the 'Street Doctor' service on the Council's website to report road flooding from blocked ditches, blocked drains or similar:

Tel: **0845 310 1111** (24hrs)

Web: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/drainage-and-flooding-roads>

Email: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/contact-highways>

 **For flooding from a burst water main or sewer**

Contact the water company that covers the area:

Anglian Water Services - **0800 771 881**

Thames Water Utilities - **0800 783 4444**

 **For all other flooding**

Use the County Council's online form to report all other flooding:

<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood/>

We will endeavour to respond to your submission within 21 days.

Please note that the above two methods are NOT to be used in emergency situations – always ring 999.

Our online report form can also be used to tell us about flooding that has affected your property or community in the past. If you have photos or videos of local flood events, particularly if the details of when/where they were taken are known, then please email to let us know about these, on:

floodmanagement@oxfordshire.gov.uk



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