

# Flooding

Advice for residents



Oxford City Council is providing this leaflet to residents in flood risk areas to give you practical tips and general advice to help you prepare and protect your homes from flooding.

## Before a flood

### What you should do to prepare

- Write a plan of how you would respond to a flood – include emergency contact numbers, essential documents and belongings you would need if you had to evacuate
- Keep your drains and gutters clear of leaves to help prevent blockages and localised flooding in heavy rainfall
- Make sure you know how to quickly turn off your water, gas and electricity mains
- Have the correct home insurance policy in place
- Prepare an emergency 'grab bag' in case of flooding – for a checklist visit [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation)
- Check what flood defences you may need to get in advance – see below for more information

### Flood risk

You can find the flood risk of your area by visiting:  
[www.gov.uk/check-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/check-flooding)

### Flood warnings

The Flood Warning Service includes three types of warning – Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning. An explanation of flood warning codes can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-warnings-what-they-are-and-what-to-do](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-warnings-what-they-are-and-what-to-do)

Sign up for flood warnings to find out if your home or business is at risk of flooding by visiting [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings) or calling Floodline on **0345 988 1188**

## **Sandbags**

- Buying sandbags might help but check government advice about how best to protect your home – [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)
- Residents and businesses can purchase sandbags from most builders' merchants including Buildbase, Wickes and B&Q
- Be a good neighbour. If you have old or infirm people near you, spare a thought for them if you are filling or collecting sandbags
- Other products similar to sandbags are also available such as 'hydrosnake' expanding water barriers - available from Screwfix
- ODS, the Council's wholly owned company, will provide sandbags in extreme emergencies to specific locations, on behalf of the Council

## **Sandbag disposal**

- For advice on sandbag disposal please refer to "After a Flood" section on page 7

## **What we will do**

- ODS receives flood warnings and alerts to frequently monitor the water levels and situation until the water has receded
- If water levels continue to rise, ODS staff will put in place the flood defences and pumps to be deployed at locations if required
- ODS will keep records of floods and share the learning with the City Council after the event
- ODS will assist the Environment Agency and Emergency Services
- ODS will work with partners to install flood barriers, if there is a risk of property or highway flooding

## During a flood

Flood water can rise quickly, so always focus on the safety of you and your family before your property and be prepared to act quickly. If there is an immediate risk to life or you are trapped by floodwater call 999.

### What you should do

In the event of an emergency or severe flooding, follow these steps to stay safe:

- If you are asked to evacuate your home, follow the advice of the emergency services
- Move family and pets upstairs, or to a high place with a means of escape
- Move important items and documents upstairs or somewhere high and safe
- Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies if flood water is about to enter your home - DO NOT touch any electrical appliances or cables when standing in flood water
- Check vulnerable neighbours or relatives if you are able to
- Avoid walking or driving through floodwater - if walking cannot be avoided wellington boots offer some protection against the danger of electrocution

### What we will do

When it floods, the emergency services lead the response. We work with the police, Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire County Council, the Environment Agency and other partners to:

- Contact vulnerable people and make sure they are safe
- Help evacuate people from flooded areas
- Close flooded roads and bridges and put diversions in place
- Clear blocked drains on the roads
- Support communities and local businesses
- Provide regular updates on the situation on our website and social media channels

## After a flood

If you are affected by a flood, there are a number of things to be aware of when clearing up:

- Ring your insurance company and register your claim
- Take photos or videos and make a list of everything that has been damaged
- Flood water could be contaminated or contain sharp objects so always wear protective clothing, boots and rubber gloves when cleaning up
- After you have spoken to your insurance company dispose of flood damaged items safely, by taking them to your nearest waste recycling centre or arrange for bulky waste collection by phoning 01865 249811 - there may be a charge for this service
- Get your electricity checked by a qualified electrician before you turn it back on

### Sandbags

- If floodwater has reached your sandbags, they cannot be recycled as they may be contaminated
- You can dispose of used sandbags in the landfill containers at your nearest waste recycling centre
- If you are disposing of the sand in your garden, wear protective gloves and dig it in the garden – do not spread across lawns or use for children's sandpits
- If the floodwater did not reach the sandbags, they can be stored for use in the future

### What we will do

After a flood we will work with our partners to organise the clear up. Working with Oxfordshire County Council and partners we will assist residents who have been evacuated to return to their homes.

## Oxford Area Flood Partnership

- The Oxford Area Flood Partnership (OAFP) brings together councils in Oxfordshire and partners with interests in flooding, including the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Network Rail and local interest groups to work jointly to reduce flood risk in the Oxford area
- OAFP provides a forum for the partner organisations to respond to flooding problems, and welcomes information that will help in understanding flooding

## Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

- The Environment Agency is working with partners including Oxford City Council on a scheme to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses in Oxford, as well as to services and major transport routes into the city
- The scheme will create a new stream with a wetland wildlife corridor, running through the existing floodplain to the west of Oxford. This will create more space for floodwater away from built-up areas, reducing flood risk in Oxford and surrounding areas for many decades to come
- The scheme will be approximately 5km long and will run from north of Botley Road down to south of the A423 southern by-pass where it re-joins the River Thames. For more information go to [www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-flood-scheme/oxford-flood-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-flood-scheme/oxford-flood-scheme)

## Drainage

The following organisations are responsible for drainage:

- **Thames Water:** own and maintain foul sewers, shared drains, 95% of surface water sewers, main drains and pumping stations
- **Oxfordshire County Council:** are responsible for dealing with surface water from roads. They own and maintain roadside gullies and piping to main surface water drains
- **Oxford City Council working with ODS:** own the surface water pumping stations at Botley, Earl Street, Headington, Quarry Hollow and Aristotle Lane Recreation Ground. As land owner we have responsibility for some watercourses, grills, headwall and watercourses



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## Useful contacts

### Latest information

- **Live weather updates:** [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)
- **Live flooding updates:** <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk>
- **Further advice on protecting against floods in Oxford:** [www.oxford.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/flooding)
- **Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit:** [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation)
- **Advice on sewer flooding:** [www.thameswater.co.uk/flooding](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/flooding)

### In an emergency

- **Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue – 999** If there is an immediate risk to life
- **Environment Agency Floodline – 0345 988 1188** To report a flood or if your property is at risk of flooding from a reservoir or river
- **Thames Water – 0800 316 9800** If flooding is from sewers or burst water mains
- **Oxfordshire County Council – 0345 310 1111** If flooding is from the highway, or is surface water.
- **Power cuts – 105** To report or get updates when your electricity has been cut off
- **Oxford City Council – 01865 249811** If households/ businesses or vulnerable residents in the Oxford City area need urgent support with welfare checks, evacuation or flood defences (including sandbags in exceptional circumstances)